

IF ISRAEL LOST THE WAR

A NOVEL

by Richard Z. Chesnoff,
Edward Klein &
Robert Littell

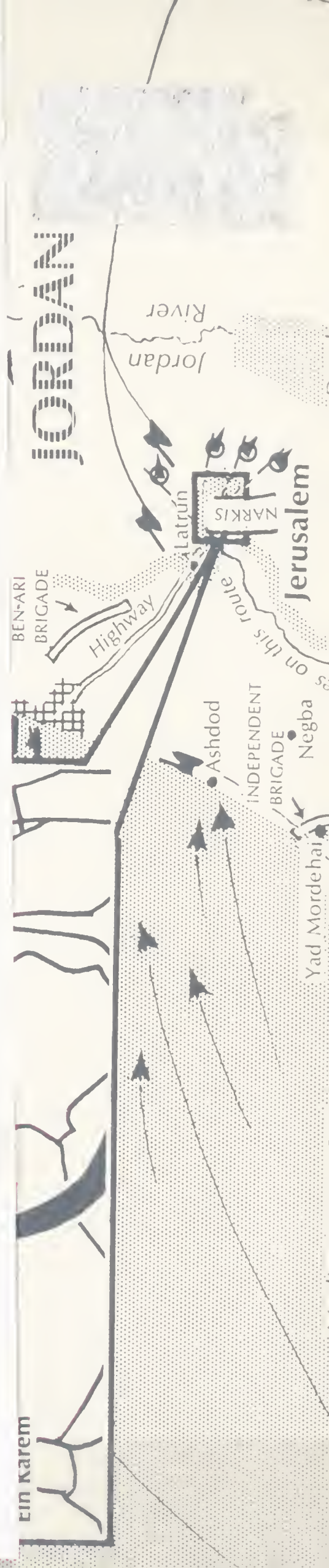


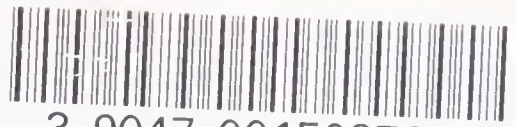
IF ISRAEL LOST THE WAR

In the summer of 1967, Richard Z. Chesnoff, Edward Klein and Robert Littell were all working as Associate Editors in NEWSWEEK's Foreign Department. About ten days before the Arab-Israeli war began, Chesnoff—who had lived in Israel from 1957 to 1967 and spoke fluent Hebrew—was dispatched to Israel to cover the crisis. In the weeks that followed, he reported from all the battlefronts and interviewed many of the Israeli leaders involved in the campaign. In New York, Klein and Littell were part of a NEWSWEEK team assigned to write cover stories on the war itself and its aftermath—coverage that won for NEWSWEEK an award from the Overseas Press Club in New York.

A few weeks after the end of the war the three authors met to explore the hypothetical question of what would have happened if the Arabs had launched a successful air strike against Israel. The

(Continued on back flap)





3 9047 00150276 0

ation Zones

SYRIA

JORD

32 45' N

35° E

CHESNOFF, R.Z.

IF ISRAEL LOST THE WAR

71-14064

FEB - 8 1997

APR 11 1997



SAN MATEO PUBLIC LIBRARY
SAN MATEO, CALIF.

Israeli Army

DEFENSE LINE

Ritter

Eilat

If Israel Lost the War

If Israel Lost the War

BY

RICHARD Z. CHESNOFF

EDWARD KLEIN

ROBERT LITTELL



Coward-McCann, Inc.

New York

Copyright © 1969
by Richard Z. Chesnoff, Edward Klein
and Robert Littell

All rights reserved. This book, or parts thereof, may not be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the Publisher. Published on the same day in the Dominion of Canada by Longmans Canada Limited, Toronto.

Second Impression

*Library of Congress Catalog
Card Number: 68-23376*

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

71-14064

To Yora, Emiko and Deanna

“The armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon are stationed on the borders of Israel. Behind them stand the armies of Iraq, Algeria, Kuwait, Sudan and the whole of the Arab nation. . . . We intend to open a general assault. This will be total war. Our basic aim is the destruction of Israel.”

EGYPT'S PRESIDENT GAMAL ABDEL NASSER
May 27, 1967

“Those native-born Israelis who survive can remain in Palestine. But I estimate that none of them will survive.”

AHMED SHUKAIRY, HEAD OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION
May 28, 1967

“Our goal is clear—to wipe Israel off the map.”

IRAQ'S PRESIDENT ABDEL RAHMAN AREF
June 1, 1967

“You are miserable Jewish people. We will pluck out the other eye of your Moshe Dayan. He will be blind, and it will be the blind leading the blind. Your army is surrendering everywhere. Jerusalem is burning. Tel Aviv is wiped out. Kill the bastard Zionists.”

A SYRIAN RADIO BROADCAST
June 6, 1967

“Kill the Jews wherever you find them. Kill them with your arms, with your hands, with your nails and teeth.”

JORDAN'S KING HUSSEIN
June 7, 1967

“Just imagine if Nasser had gotten to our airfields first. What would have happened if he had bombed out our airfields while the planes were on the ground, or if he had bombed them while our planes were in the air? That was the constant nightmare before the war.”

FORMER ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER GOLDA MEIR

“A successful first air strike by the Arabs would have been decisive. Some people say, ‘Oh, yes, but what about the Americans?’ I would hate to be in a position where the existence of Israel depended on the United States. I wouldn’t want to have to count on the United States.”

FORMER ISRAELI CHIEF OF STAFF YITZHAK RABIN

If Israel Lost the War

Prologue

Down Ruppin Road they came, a column of smiling, tan-legged young women, their khaki skirts swinging to the strut of the march. In the sun-bathed reviewing stand across the street from the new museum, a stocky man with a bulldog face joined the enthusiastic applause that swelled up from the crowd at the sight of the women soldiers of Israel's citizen army. For Premier Levi Eshkol, as for his 2.4 million Jewish countrymen, it was a joyous occasion; the military parade taking place in Jerusalem marked their nation's nineteenth anniversary as an independent state. As the women marched smartly by, Eshkol snapped a pair of green-tinted sunglasses over his bifocals and, when he thought no one would notice, leaned nonchalantly toward Major General Yitzhak Rabin, his Chief of Staff.

"How much longer?" Eshkol whispered.

"We're just about halfway through," Rabin said.

Eshkol nodded patiently.

Then almost as an afterthought, Rabin remarked: "By the way, I received a report this morning that Nasser is moving troops through downtown Cairo. They're headed east for Sinai."

That was May 15, 1967. In the days that followed, long columns of dust-covered Egyptian armor snaked their way across the Sinai peninsula toward the borders of Israel. Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser, fearing an Israeli attack against Syria, had sent his army to face down the Jews. At first, the Israelis—who denied any intention of attacking Syria—reacted

calmly. "Confidentially," a government spokesman told reporters during a background briefing, "we think this is a monumental bluff." To be on the safe side, however, General Rabin ordered a partial mobilization. All across the country, radio transmitters broadcast sets of coded mobilization orders (samples: "Desert flowers bloom" and "Sons of Massada") summoning tens of thousands of civilians to prearranged rendezvous with their reserve units.

The crisis escalated in a seemingly inexorable chain of events. When the Egyptian President asked United Nations peace teams to leave their corrugated metal border posts along the Sinai and Gaza frontiers, Secretary General U Thant promptly complied by ordering the UN troops to evacuate the region completely. This left Egyptian artillery in complete command of Sharm el Sheikh, the strategic post dominating the Straits of Tiran at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba. It also left Israeli and Egyptian soldiers face to face across a few miles of bare desert sand for the first time in eleven years. If Nasser *had* been bluffing, he now came under enormous pressure not to back down. Any lingering hope that the crisis would simply dissolve was erased when Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping. Thus, without firing a shot, Nasser succeeded in severing Jerusalem's flourishing trade with East Africa and the Orient. And when Eshkol called a full-dress Cabinet session to order a week after the Independence Day parade, there was only one item on the agenda: *bitahon*—security.

Frantically Israel redoubled its search for a diplomatic solution. In Paris, Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban asked President Charles de Gaulle for support. De Gaulle urged restraint, and at one point in the conversation he evasively remarked to Eban: "Mais vous parlez très bien le français, monsieur." The next day, Eban flew to Washington and spoke with President Lyndon B. Johnson. "I want to see that little blue and white Israeli flag sailing down those straits," Johnson said. But the President asked Israel to sit tight for two weeks in order to give the United States an opportunity to mount Operation Regatta—an international maritime force that would challenge the

Egyptian blockade. The project fizzled. Only the tiny Netherlands seemed willing to join the armada.

Tensions soared when Jordan's King Hussein, piloting his own jet, flew to Cairo and handed over command of his army to an Egyptian general. By the end of May, 900 Egyptian tanks and 7 full Egyptian divisions were poised on Israel's southern frontier. And in mosques throughout the Arab world, the faithful were exhorted to jihad—holy war. At this point, Eshkol reluctantly bowed to a jittery Israeli public and accepted General Moshe Dayan, the hero of the 1956 Sinai campaign, into the Cabinet as Defense Minister. On Saturday, June 3, the Cabinet was still hopelessly divided on whether to take military action or place its trust in diplomacy. And Dayan told a press conference: "I would think just now it is too late and too early—too late to react right away against the blockade and too early to draw any conclusions on the diplomatic way of handling the matter."

Then, on the morning of June 5, the Arab Air Force struck.

JIHAD!

Monday, June Fifth

The morning sun never failed to excite Yaakov Ezra. It wasn't so much the sun itself as what it did to the water. This morning it sparkled off the Mediterranean like phosphorus. Thousands of bubbles of light seemed to burst under the bow of his trawler as it headed back toward Jaffa, nine miles away. Below, the ship's clock struck eight bells—eight o'clock.

Yaakov didn't notice the planes until they were overhead. Something—perhaps the shadows that seemed to erase the pinpoints of shimmering light from the sea—made him look up. They were coming straight in from the horizon, flying 100 feet above the water, 3 neat "V" formations, 27 jets in all. They came soundlessly, like gliders or gulls. Once they had passed overhead, the roar of 27 jet engines flying faster than the speed of sound enveloped Yaakov. Then, almost as suddenly, the roar subsided, and the jets blended into the faint outline of Israel's flat coastline. I wonder what our boys are up to? Yaakov thought.

Dalia Rosenstein, her hair still in curlers, had just kissed her husband, Rafi, good-bye and was waving to him from their small third-floor terrace when she heard the planes. She and Rafi, the deputy director of civil defense in Jerusalem, looked up. Both instantly knew that something was drastically wrong. Since the 1949 armistice agreement, military jets had been prohibited from flying over the divided city of Jerusalem. Rafi spun on his heel and came back into the pink stone apartment house. Dalia lifted their seven-month-old baby boy from his playpen and raced downstairs to meet him.

“Let’s get to the shelter,” she said.

“Let’s not panic,” he said. “They’ll be after the airfields first. They probably won’t waste a bomb on us just yet.”

Like tens of thousands of Israeli reservists, Amos Grunberg, a chubby thirty-seven-year-old captain in the Army Engineer Corps, had been eating Negev dust for the past ten days. At eight o’clock Monday morning, Grunberg, a Tel Aviv accountant in civilian life, was listening to the news on Kol Israel. The announcer droned on: the Cabinet (enlarged now with Dayan) had met the day before to discuss the current crisis; the Johnson Administration was examining all possibilities of restoring normal conditions to the Mideast.

“Words, words, words. All these bastards know is words,” Grunberg muttered to Mizrahi, a mustachioed Moroccan private who had been assigned as his driver.

“Let them screw themselves with their words,” Mizrahi said. “Why don’t we just go and give the Egyptians a solid hit instead of sitting on our asses in this lousy place?”

“Listen, Mizrahi, what can you do? That’s the way a government works. We think they’re stupid. Maybe they are. But Dayan will get them off their asses. In the meantime, let’s move ourselves. Check the gas in the jeep, and let’s get going. I want to survey the tank traps on the border this morning.”

Grunberg and Mizrahi drove out of their base, a tent camp at Nitzana near the Sinai border, past a fleet of commandeered vehicles (blue and white Egged buses, a Tnuva milk delivery van, some private cars and a few pickup trucks camouflaged with mud), and headed onto a dirt track that led southeast toward the Nahal pioneer youth settlement at Beerotayim. Within seconds their faces were covered with a thin layer of beige desert dust.

Suddenly Grunberg heard the drone of jets. He swiveled around and saw them low on the horizon, but he didn’t pay much attention to them. He was used to watching Israeli jets sweep in for practice runs in the desert. Even the dull bursting of bombs miles away couldn’t make him turn his head a second time. “More target practice,” he yelled into Mizrahi’s ear.

At that moment two planes zoomed low over the jeep, spewing machine-gun fire. Tiny plumes of dust etched a line in the road alongside the jeep. Grunberg wiped his sleeve across his goggles and glanced up. His mouth opened. His hand gripped the seat until his knuckles stood out white.

“My God,” he shouted. “They’re MIG’s!”

At first, it seemed as if the claxon were pulsating at the other end of a long tunnel. When it finally punched its way through to Uri Dror’s consciousness, he sat bolt upright, his ears bathed in a furious thunderstorm of sound. Slowly Uri began to work his way through the layers of sound. First there was the claxon. Then the base’s air raid siren wailing frantically. Beyond that, the sharp staccato crack of Israeli anti-aircraft guns. And finally, the dull thud of bombs, shaking the glasses on the shelf in the corner of the room. And in the split second when all these sounds blended, Uri realized that Israel was fighting for its life.

The twenty-two-year-old Air Force lieutenant zipped up his flying suit, pulled on his boots and flung himself through the door. What he saw stunned him. Thick blue-black smoke billowed up from a dozen directions. The base’s fuel dump to the south was an inferno. Many of the seventy-six Mystères and Mirages scattered in revetments looked like toys that had been stepped on—dirty, squashed, scarred, smoking. The wreck of a MIG-21 stood on its nose at the far end of the runway; two more MIG’s had cracked up on the fields north of the main runway. Above, MIG’s were dipping and climbing in graceful arcs as if they were following some invisible roller coaster track, all the time firing cannon and rockets at the ground. At times they flew so low that Uri could see the faces of the pilots.

Uri took all this in as he ran toward his plane. Everyone was running: pilots, ground crews, maintenance men, air-control officers. The dead and dying littered the field, but nobody stopped to help them. A hundred yards to his right, Uri saw four men struggling to pull a bomb free from a burning plane. Nearby, two men in coveralls were spraying the burning fuselage with foam. An instant later, an explosion sent Uri sprawl-

ing. And when he looked again, all that was left was the stump of the hose—still spurting foam.

Winded and scared, Uri raced around a dirt embankment and was astonished to see his Mirage standing untouched. Shmuel, the chief of his ground crew, had gotten there first and started the engine, then climbed onto the embankment and tried to flag down a pilot—any pilot—to get his beloved jet into the air before a MIG destroyed it. When Shmuel saw Uri, he almost cried. Uri vaulted onto the wing and into the cockpit. Shmuel screamed something, but his voice was lost in the whine of the jet engine. The Mirage leaped toward the runway. A Mirage taxiing to his left seemed to disintegrate, but Uri's plane roared down the runway and climbed.

Somehow he reached for clear sky and made it, punched off his spare fuel tanks, then wheeled over and looked for a target. By now he was no longer afraid, just angry. He rolled sharply to the left to get in position behind an Egyptian MIG. The Egyptian pilot saw him and executed a defensive series of vertical rolling scissors. But the Mirage slowed down first, putting the MIG in Uri's gunsight. Uri squeezed the red button on the throttle and felt the cannon spitting. Seconds later, he flew through a great wispy brown cloud that was all that remained of the MIG. He climbed again and leveled off and looked down and saw his base at Hatzor almost enveloped in black smoke and saw Gedera, his home, and thought of his wife looking up into the sky, thinking of him. Suddenly Uri caught sight of two MIG's sweeping in a long curve behind him. He threw his Mirage into a high-G roll over and ended up behind them. He depressed the button under his finger and heard his cannon roar. The MIG he was firing at slid into a scissors and Uri broke into a high-speed yo-yo, his thumb still pressing down on the button. A thin ribbon of smoke curled from the wing of the MIG. Then it burst into flame and went out of control.

Now, for the first time, Uri thought about what he was doing. He had scored two kills, yet he felt only a sense of impending doom. Then, out of the corner of his eye, he saw a MIG coming straight at him from a cloud bank, guns blazing. Uri jerked back hard on the control stick. He felt the first shock as a dozen

20-millimeter cannon shells pierced the side of the plane and shredded his jet engine. The Mirage simply fell out from under his hands like a dead bird, fell left, tumbled left as smoke and flame began to fill the cockpit. Uri's hand fumbled for the ejection mechanism. Before he could reach it, the Mirage disintegrated in a ball of brilliant orange fire and the pieces drifted down toward the great lush fields of central Israel.

In Washington, the first word of the Arab air strike reached the communications center of the White House basement Situation Room at 2:38 A.M. As soon as the coded message finished clacking over the teletype, the senior duty officer, Ray Wotring, twenty-nine, put aside the book he was reading—*Games People Play*—and went to work on a typewriter-sized decoding machine. Swiftly the random groups of five letters (DJRYT MGJGU FHGTF KIKPL UYNBI) were translated into the startling news:

From: COMSIXFLT

To: Chief of Naval Operations

No: 660 (urgent, President's code)

Preliminary message intercepts obtained by U.S.S. *Liberty* indicate Egyptian Air Force attacking Israeli air bases. Initial damage assessments unavailable, but Egyptians apparently achieved complete surprise. Dogfights presently in progress over Tel Aviv.

Nine minutes later, Wotring was on the telephone to Harold Saunders, the Situation Room staff man in charge of the Middle East "account." Saunders copied down the message on the back of an envelope, hung up, lit a cigarette and then dialed a phone number that was known to only a handful of people in all of Washington. At precisely 2:49, a white phone rang in the Georgetown bedroom of Walt Whitman Rostow, the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. Without a word, Rostow, a balding, stocky former economics professor, listened as Saunders slowly read the Sixth Fleet message twice. "Okay," Rostow said, "meet you down in the Situation Room in twenty-five minutes."

Before Rostow left home, he placed two phone calls—one to Secretary of State Dean Rusk and the other to Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara. Then Rostow got behind the wheel of his family Mercury and drove through the dark, deserted streets of Washington to the White House. By the time he arrived at the Situation Room, it was 3:20 A.M. Another message from the Sixth Fleet was being decoded in the windowless room that had once served as the White House bowling alley. This one had little information to add to the first, other than the disquieting news that Radio Cairo was now jubilantly claiming that Egyptian pilots had knocked out Israel's two largest airfields. Rostow sat down at a long table next to a tan telephone with the legend "Private Line President" and began writing a list of things he should do before calling Lyndon Johnson.

As things turned out, Lyndon Johnson already knew almost as much as Rostow. After receiving the news from Merriman Smith of United Press International, White House Press Secretary George Christian had double-checked it with the Associated Press and, at 3:50, had awakened the President. Since then, Johnson, wearing a pair of rimless spectacles and propped up on three pillows in bed, had been listening to the radio news on WTOP and reading the latest intelligence reports on the Middle East. Rostow's call came into his bedroom at 4:35. (Throughout this first day of the war, the President would personally receive and make no fewer than seventy-two phone calls dealing directly with the conflict.)

Cradling the phone under his chin, the President asked Rostow a number of questions: Had he cabled the American embassies in Tel Aviv and the Arab capitals for a fuller assessment? Had he taken precautionary measures to assure the safety of American citizens in the area in the event the situation deteriorated? Had he notified the Sixth Fleet to move the U.S.S. *Liberty* (which, both men knew, was an electronic intelligence ship) closer to the scene of battle? Rostow replied that he had taken care of the first and second points raised by the President but that, of course, he did not have the authority to order the movement of ships. In a few brief sentences they dis-

cussed what to do about the *Liberty* and decided that the ship should be sent immediately to a station off the Sinai coastal city of El Arish and there patrol just outside the twelve-mile territorial limit.

“That’s real fine, Walt, that’s fine,” Johnson said. “Now I think it’d be a good idea if you got some of the boys together for a skull session in the Cabinet room. Tell Bill Macomber I’m counting on him joining in. And try and get Goldberg down from New York. Make that Goldberg and Bundy. Say ’bout eight thirty.”

“Certainly, Mr. President,” Rostow replied.

None of the men whom Rostow had assembled could fail to be struck by the President’s appearance when he entered the Cabinet room. His normally ruddy face seemed drawn and haggard. There were dark sepia patches under his eyes, and small beads of perspiration had formed on his forehead at the hair-line. When he greeted his advisers, his voice was hoarse and even a little weak. As Johnson sat down at the highly polished, coffin-shaped Cabinet table, Rostow thought to himself: He’s got a fever. What a hell of a time for the President of the United States to have a fever. In fact, the President’s temperature that morning was 101.6 degrees—high enough for the White House physician, Vice-Admiral George Burkley, to urge him to stay in bed.

Seated around the table with the President were ten men who, in the hours and days to come, would form a “crisis Cabinet” along the lines of John F. Kennedy’s EXCOMM during the Cuban missile crisis period. Besides Rostow, Rusk, McNamara and Christian, this group included among its members General Earle G. “Bus” Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Richard Helms, director of the Central Intelligence Agency; William B. Macomber, Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations; McGeorge Bundy, president of the Ford Foundation and Rostow’s immediate predecessor; Lucius Battle, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs; and Arthur Goldberg, Ambassador to the United Nations. An eleventh member of the group was missing; a plane

carrying Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey to Minnesota for a speech had been ordered to turn around in midflight and come back to Washington.

A breakfast buffet was set up on a sideboard along one side of the room, and each of the participants followed the President's example and helped himself to grapefruit halves, chipped beef, toast, marmalade, tea or coffee.

"Well," the President said, "I've already had a call from Wayne Morse."

A quietly amused titter went around the table.

"Wayne," the President continued, "has been blowing his top every time we send so much as a cartridge case to Vietnam. Now he's blowing his top because I'm not about ready to send six aircraft carriers to the Red Sea."

"That seems to be part of a pattern, Mr. President," Bill Macomber said. He cleared his throat and continued addressing Johnson—without, however, finding the courage to look him in the eye. "I've been in touch with Russ Long and Carl Albert, and they both agree that our Vietnam doves have suddenly sprouted hawkish talons on the Mideast. Jake Javits has got a speech planned for this afternoon, and I hear that Bobby's going to add a few words of his own. In short, the pressure's on for us to show some sign that we'll back Israel all the way."

The President listened to all this slumped in his seat, his chin resting in the palm of his left hand. "Jake and Bobby don't concern me much," he said in a half mumble. "It's those Arabs. What I want to know is, how much hard information do we have to go on?" He looked across the table at Walt Rostow.

Before Rostow could respond, Dean Rusk took the floor. Though on the surface, relations between Rusk and Rostow were perfectly cordial, the two men were hardly the best of friends. To begin with, Rusk, the self-made Georgia farm boy, and Rostow, the scion of a Jewish intellectual family, had little in common. But even more important than that, Rusk resented Rostow's authority in the field of foreign policy and, at every opportunity, jealously asserted the claim of his State Department in the presence of Johnson. No one in the room was sur-

prised, therefore, when Rusk said: “Mr. President, if you don’t mind, I’ve asked Luke [Battle] to prepare a briefing on the situation for this meeting.”

Johnson nodded his agreement and appeased Rostow with a secret wink.

Lucius Battle, a lanky six-footer, stood up, holding a sheaf of papers in his hands. “Well, Mr. President,” he began, “we don’t know a hell of a lot. But what we do know is all bad. I’ll give it to you chronologically. Sometime after eight o’clock Israeli time, the Arabs launched a coordinated attack against every air base in Israel. They even shot up some stretches of highway that must have looked like runways to them. We don’t know exactly how many planes they flew, but we do know how many the Arabs could have put into the air, and we suspect that they threw everything they had into this. We figure Egypt had four hundred jets—including forty MIG-21’s. Algeria sent in thirty-five MIG-21’s three days ago. You remember the CIA report on that. Iraq had two hundred jets, Jordan another fifty, Syria one hundred thirty—”

“That’s not quite accurate.” The speaker was General Wheeler. “As long as we’re throwing figures around, we might as well get them straight. They could never have put all that in the air at once. You’ve got to figure fifteen percent downtime for maintenance.”

“Okay, all right,” Battle continued a little impatiently, “that would still leave, say, around seven hundred and forty first-strike aircraft available. We think they hit with somewhere around six hundred and fifty. From what we can piece together so far, they caught the Israelis with their pants down. Their intelligence was great. They seemed to know where all the holes were in the Israeli Early Warning System. And they came in low through those gaps like they were threading a needle.”

Dick Helms agreed. “The Arabs managed to hit everything and anything that even looked like an Israeli plane,” he said. “They were more effective than anyone could have predicted.”

The President straightened up in his chair and leaned forward, planting his elbows on the table. “I was just going over

some of your reports this morning, Dick,” Johnson said with a hint of sarcasm, “and if what you say was accurate, we shouldn’t have too much to worry about, should we?”

Helms instantly detected the edge on Johnson’s voice. He took a sip of lukewarm coffee, then said, ““Mr. President, the Joint Chiefs have war-gamed this thing at least four times in the past five years. At the agency, I had two independent groups work on this. Any way we looked at it—whether Israel struck first or the Arabs struck first—we came up with the same answer as the Joint Chiefs: an Israeli victory. But you know, Mr. President, these projections work on the principle of probability. And no matter how we sliced it, it simply didn’t seem probable to us that the Arabs could have neutralized the Israeli Air Force in a single blow.”

“Are you telling us,” McNamara asked, “that the only thing you and the Joint Chiefs failed to program was a successful Arab first strike?”

McNamara’s thrust visibly irritated Helms. “Who in this room can honestly say that he considered a successful Arab first strike plausible?” he retorted.

“All right,” McNamara said. “How do you assess the situation now?”

“All our calculations are out the window,” Helms replied.

“I think we need a better answer than that,” McGeorge Bundy said.

“Well,” Helms said, “man for man, there’s no question but that your Israeli is a better soldier.” Helms turned to General Wheeler. “Present company excepted, General,” he said, “there’s probably no better general staff than the Israelis’. As for the equipment, it’s true that they’ve recently mounted 90-millimeter guns on their old Sherman tanks. But some of our ordnance people tell me that might be more of a hindrance than a help.”

“Why’s that?” Johnson asked.

“Because,” Helms said, “the heavier guns have a tendency to cut into the tank’s operational effectiveness. But all this, let me hasten to add, is somewhat speculative. The crucial question, the nitty-gritty, is air power. If, in fact, the Arabs control the

air, the Israelis are going to have their hands full, to say the least. Their logistics, for one thing, will be a holy mess. And Tel Aviv may end up looking like Dresden. This is a limb that nobody here may want to go out on, but we calculate the Israelis may still be able to hold their own even without air cover."

There was a moment of silence at the table. The President broke it.

"Maybe those Arabs will stop after today's air strikes," he said. "Do we know for a fact that they've started on the ground?"

"I'm afraid so, Mr. President." Walt Rostow had spoken up at last. "The latest from the Sixth Fleet is that artillery barrages have opened up all along the Israeli border. Jerusalem's under attack. I think we've got to go on the assumption that the Arabs are going to move with all they've got, now that they've destroyed the Israeli Air Force. Let's put ourselves in their shoes. They've been waiting nineteen years for this. If they don't move now, they never will."

Johnson swiveled uncomfortably in his chair. During the conversation his voice had grown progressively more raspy and his face more flushed with fever, and it was apparent that he was impatient. Just then, the telephone console beside his chair buzzed. It was Marvin Watson, the President's special assistant, with word that Israel's ambassador, Avraham Harman, was waiting for him in the reception room of the Oval Office.

The President hung up and wiped his perspiring forehead with the back of his hand. "I've got to step out for a moment," he said, not mentioning why. "But I don't think this meeting should break up just yet. It's clear that there are a couple of things we've got to do. First, Arthur, I want you to go back up to the United Nations and get these Arabs to take off their shoes and put their feet in some cold water and cool on down. I want you to try and get an immediate cease-fire on this thing.

"Second"—and he counted the point off on the large fingers of his right hand—"I want the Russians brought in. Hell, it's Russian planes doing all the shooting, and if we want to put the kibosh on this thing, we'll need their cooperation."

“If their boys are doing as well as it looks, Mr. President,” Goldberg said, “that might not be easy.”

“Well, there’s only one way we’re going to find out,” Johnson said, his voice reduced to a gravelly whisper. “I want to talk to Moscow. Let’s open the Hot Line. Write me up a draft. I’ll be back in half an hour.”

The President was perspiring freely through his tab-collar shirt when Israeli Ambassador Avraham Harman and his deputy, Ephraim Evron, were ushered into the Oval Office. Harman, a chubby, English-born career diplomat, was grim-faced; Evron, a short, wiry man in his late forties, seemed perfectly composed. Without saying a word, Johnson motioned the two men to seats opposite his desk. “I’m a little under the weather this morning, Mr. Ambassador,” the President said, “so I’d really appreciate it if we could keep this meeting as short as possible.”

“I’ll try to be brief,” Harman said. “Our reports are still sketchy, but we know that both Jerusalem and Tel Aviv are under heavy Jordanian and Egyptian fire, that Syrian forces have opened heavy artillery attacks on our Galilee settlements and that the area around the Gaza Strip has been under fire since about eight thirty this morning our time. Our army responded immediately, but I’m afraid that the last word we had was that more than fifty percent of our air force was destroyed in the initial attack. Mr. Evron will explain to you what that means to us.”

Evron looked the President straight in the eye. “In effect,” he said slowly in a slight Israeli accent, “we are in a totally vulnerable position, Mr. President. Now that the Arabs have neutralized our air force, our cities are completely open to heavy air raids. I’m sure you realize, Mr. President, that this situation would never have arisen if my government hadn’t accepted your personal request that we wait for a diplomatic settlement.”

“I appreciate that, Mr. Evron,” the President said. “Your position is well understood here, and I assure you that we aim to express our gratitude for your forbearance in meaningful ways.”

Monday, June 5th 29

“Mr. President,” Evron replied, “we deeply appreciate your sentiments. But what we need now is your help—the help of the United States, which under four Presidents has solemnly pledged to guarantee our right to existence. Can’t you give us some indication, some idea of what concrete measures your government is planning to take, so that we can report this to our prime minister?”

“Now, Mr. Evron,” Johnson responded, “I’m sure your ambassador here knows that we all share your concern. But I think that at this point the best move for all of us is to continue to exchange information on the situation as it develops. You can rest assured that we will do everything in our power to stop the fighting and that Mr. Rusk will be in contact with you later today in order . . .”

Later, on their way out, Evron turned to Harman and whispered, “I think you ought to cable Jerusalem that LBJ is far from ready to go all the way.”

The President felt grippy when he returned to the Cabinet room. He must, he knew, get into bed. Briefly he reported to his assembled advisers that he had met with Ambassador Harman. “I told him,” said Johnson, stretching the truth just a bit, “that we have a commitment to Israel, but that this isn’t the time or place to lose our heads.”

Two or three of the men in the room nodded in agreement.

“We’ve composed a statement for the Hot Line,” Rusk said, “and notified Moscow that you’d be on the wire to Kosygin this morning.”

“Let’s see it.” And Johnson stretched his long arm across the table and took the proposed message. He read it over quickly. “Looks fine,” he said, and left the room for his bed.

TRANSCRIPT OF HOT LINE CONVERSATION, WASHINGTON-
MOSCOW, 0925–0952, JUNE FIFTH

WASHINGTON: TL&‰* #L&‰# LINE CLEAR. LINE CLEAR, LINE CLEAR. THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO CHAIRMAN KOSYGIN. THE PURPOSE OF ACTIVATING THIS LINE, MR. CHAIRMAN, IS TO APPRISE YOU OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE

MIDDLE EAST. OUR SIXTH FLEET AND OUR EMBASSIES IN THE AREA REPORT THAT THE COMBINED ARAB AIR FORCES LAUNCHED A SURPRISE ATTACK AGAINST ISRAELI AIR BASES SHORTLY AFTER 0800. AS YET, WE HAVE NO, REPEAT, NO CLEAR IDEA OF LOSSES ON EITHER SIDE. BUT I AM CERTAIN THAT YOU CAN APPRECIATE THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION IMMEDIATELY. OUR WISH IS THAT BY ACTIVATING THIS LINE WE CAN ATTEMPT TO EXPLORE TOGETHER WHAT STEPS WE AND OUR ASSOCIATES CAN TAKE TO CONTAIN THE FIGHTING THAT HAS ALREADY STARTED AND KEEP IT FROM SPREADING.

MOSCOW: LINE CLEAR. LINE CLEAR. THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, FOR SHARING YOUR VIEWS WITH US SO FRANKLY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOSTILITIES. OUR INFORMATION AGREES WITH YOURS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE CRUCIAL POINT. THE ARAB AIR FORCES DID NOT, REPEAT, NOT INITIATE THE ATTACK AGAINST ISRAEL. RATHER THE ARABS WERE RESPONDING IN SELF-DEFENSE TO A COORDINATED THRUST BY THE ISRAELI AIR ARM AND GROUND FORCES WHICH WAS AIMED AT CATCHING THE EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN ARMED FORCES BY SURPRISE. FROM WHAT MY COLLEAGUES AND I HAVE LEARNED, IT WAS CLEARLY A CASE OF SELF-DEFENSE.

The dull thump of exploding artillery shells echoed across the brown Jerusalem hills as General Moshe Dayan's car raced in from the almost deserted Tel Aviv highway and turned onto the winding road that led to the Knesset. Dayan had planned the day quite differently. That morning, the newly appointed Defense Minister was to have flown north to the Galilee by helicopter to inspect troop positions along the Syrian frontier. Then he was scheduled to return to Tel Aviv and drive to Jerusalem for a 4 P.M. Knesset meeting, where he would be officially sworn in as a member of the Cabinet. Now, Dayan mused, the ceremony seemed superfluous.

A round of mortar fire shattered the windows of the squat, square Knesset building. And as Dayan, wearing a khaki uniform with no insignia, stepped out of his car, the glass fell tinkling into the courtyard below. Looking drawn, his one eye bloodshot, Dayan glanced up at the now-empty top row of windows and then over to the nearby Rehavia section of the

city. Small clouds of smoke spiraled up from the neat complex of gardens and limestone apartment buildings. And an ambulance, its siren screaming, careened madly down the road leading to Shaarei Zedek Hospital.

“General Dayan,” a steel-helmeted guard at the Knesset members’ entrance called, “they’re waiting for you in the west-wing shelter.”

Clutching a brown briefcase, Dayan brushed past a cluster of waiting newsmen and strode briskly across the marble halls and down three flights of stairs to the Knesset subbasement. Four guards carrying Uzzi submachine guns stood before the door of the sandbagged room that had been set aside for emergency use by the Israeli Cabinet. Wanly returning the guards’ salute, Dayan entered the room.

He caught Premier Levi Eshkol in midsentence.

“Moshe,” Eshkol said nervously, half rising from his chair, “I’m glad you’re here—that you got here safely. There was a report that the highway near Latrun was under Jordanian fire.”

The pudgy, sad-faced Premier pointed toward the roomful of people.

“Look,” Eshkol said, “considering the circumstances, we decided in your absence to invite Ben-Gurion and Golda to join us for your report.”

Dayan appreciated Eshkol’s gesture. The Premier and Ben-Gurion had been locked in a bitter political dispute for the past three years, and for him to invite the old man—who, not incidentally, was Dayan’s political mentor—to the meeting was an encouraging sign. If nothing else, the ranks were closing in this crisis. And that, Dayan thought, was the first good omen of the day.

Nodding to Eshkol and then to Ben-Gurion, Dayan quickly surveyed the cement-block Cabinet room. The twenty faces around the formica-topped table were a study in grimness. Eshkol stared expectantly. Ben-Gurion, his white lion’s mane askew, clutched his jowls with his left hand, his eyes barely open. Foreign Minister Abba Eban busily scribbled notes to himself. Zerah Warhaftig, the Minister of Religious Affairs, nervously picked at his ear with a pencil stub. And the two left-

wing ministers, who had steadfastly opposed Eshkol's and Dayan's call for a preemptive Israeli strike, carefully avoided Dayan's glance by sipping from glasses of Paz orangeade.

"I don't know what you've been talking about till now," Dayan said quietly as he pulled a folder of notes from his briefcase, "but if it's included any recriminations about what decisions were or were not taken during the past few days, let me say that I have no intention of joining in a free-for-all. We all have our accounts to make," he said, staring over everyone's head, "and perhaps some day in the future we, or someone else, will have an opportunity to make those accounts. Right now, I think you should have no illusions about a very bleak present."

Then, switching to the crisp voice of a military officer, Dayan continued. "I assume you've all had the initial reports from the Chief of Staff, so I don't have to go into any details as to how things happened this morning. The situation at the moment is this. When this day began, our air force totaled three hundred and eighty-five planes. According to Moti's [Air Force Commander Mordehai Hod] latest report of sixteen hundred hours, we now have less than one hundred planes left—eighty-seven or eighty-eight, to be exact."

A barely audible sigh went around the table.

"How could they surprise us like this?" Eshkol asked. "What happened to our precautions?"

"Their intelligence was a lot better than we thought," Dayan replied. "They apparently knew as much as we do about our Early Warning System. The Egyptians flew straight out to sea and came in low over the Mediterranean. The others flew in through blind quadrants in our radar net. Our airborne alert—even though we increased it to ten percent yesterday—was swamped by sheer numbers."

Dayan hooked his thumb into his web belt and pushed it under his paunch. Then he went on without changing his expression. "Our casualties have been heavy. The air force had nearly five hundred and fifty pilots on active and reserve duty. As of one hour ago, eighty-nine pilots had been killed and another one hundred and seventy-five had been wounded. I think we

can assume that when the full combat reports are in for the day, those figures will go up considerably.

“In addition to all this, only ten of our thirty-six major radar installations are still operational. Roughly half of our reserve fuel was destroyed. All but five or six jet-capable runways were put out of commission.

“Let me also tell you,” he continued, “our planes and ground crews took a heavy toll of the enemy’s aircraft today. By our best calculations, the Arabs had seven hundred and fifty planes available for combat and probably used six hundred and eighty of them in the strikes.* We’ve already destroyed one hundred and thirty-six Arab planes—or nearly one out of every five they flew. But even if these figures are correct—and, of course, I believe that they are—that still leaves the Arabs with a potential air-strike force of six hundred to six hundred and twenty planes.” Dayan paused to let the statistics sink in. He carefully put his notes in a manila folder and put the folder into his briefcase. Then he turned back to the Cabinet.

For a moment there was dead silence.

Eshkol broke in. “Let me put it to you bluntly,” he said. “Is there any doubt in your mind that the armies can hold the borders?”

“Of course there’s doubt,” Dayan answered with almost savage directness. “I wouldn’t be honest if I said there was no doubt. All these figures add up to a military situation of disastrous proportions. If the Arabs press their advantage in the air—and, let me add, I have not the slightest doubt that they will do exactly that—if, as I say, they press their advantage, it will leave our armor, especially in the desert, completely exposed. If I can borrow one of our Foreign Minister’s metaphors, it will rain very hard and we will be without an umbrella. For the moment, the survival of our tanks and armored columns will depend on the strength and effectiveness of our anti-air-

* In fact, both the U.S. Intelligence community (page 25) and General Dayan underestimated the strength of the Arab Air Force—but not by much. On June 5, the Arab air armada totaled 872 planes, of which 767 were available and 714 were used in the initial strike. The reasons for the shortfall in U.S. and Israeli assessments: thanks to Soviet advisers, the Arabs had been able to reduce the normal 15 percent downtime for maintenance to 12 percent, and they daringly kept only a handful of planes at home for defense.

craft defenses and camouflage. And I'm not even taking into account the possibility that they'll use poison gas."

"Perhaps if we take the offensive, we can neutralize their advantage." The speaker was Yigal Allon, the rugged, sandy-haired Minister of Labor. The youngest of all the Cabinet ministers, Allon was nonetheless a politically powerful figure, and when he spoke he was invariably listened to with respect by his elders. During Israel's 1948 War of Independence, he had commanded the Palmach, the elite striking force of the Jewish underground army, and his brilliant tactics were credited with having swept the Egyptians from the Negev. Allon's voice trailed off as Eshkol's aide, Aviad Yaffe, walked into the room and handed the Prime Minister a note.

Eshkol unfolded it, read it, looked up and murmured: "The nuclear reactor at Dimona has been hit and destroyed."

Allon winced sharply, then started to pick up where he left off, but Dayan interrupted him with a wave of his hand. "It would be suicide for our tank columns to go charging into the desert," he said. "Now, for the moment, we must bide our time. This morning I had Rabin issue orders to put Operation Yam Suf [Red Sea] into effect. Our commanders have been ordered not to conduct offensive operations. Lightning-swift thrusts into enemy territory would look good in headlines, but they would get us nowhere."

Dayan argued the case for Yam Suf as if he were trying to convince himself. "The first priority now is not to expose a single tank or armored car needlessly. The other important thing is to keep our supply lines as short as possible. Push them out and the Arab jets will cut them off. All this, gentlemen, will require a complete reversal of our usual tactics. Under Operation Yam Suf we plan to let the enemy columns penetrate—deeply, if necessary—into Israeli territory. This will undoubtedly involve tremendous civilian casualties—but we have no choice. Then, when *his* supply lines are long, when *his* jets can only stay over target a few minutes because of the distance back to base, then and only then, we engage him—and swallow him whole. We fight him at such close range that he can't use his air power for fear of hitting his own troops. We grapple with him

like a boxer going into a clinch. And the superiority of our fighting men will tip the scales in our favor.” Dayan banged the top of the thick conference table for emphasis, then, embarrassed by his own emotions, sat down abruptly with a slight flush on his face.

Eshkol rose. “Gentlemen, our new Defense Minister, as always, has given us the compliment of speaking frankly. And as always, Moshe, we are in your debt. Now there are some things that *I* would like to suggest, too.” Everyone in the room was aware of an undercurrent of tension between Eshkol and Dayan. “We will, of course, leave the actual conduct of military operations to those best qualified to make decisions in that area. But I think there are things we can do, too. First, we had better begin scraping the bottom of the barrel while we can. Moshe, have the Defense Ministry’s manpower department take stock of our reserves. It seems to me we can call upon another thirty thousand older men if the situation gets worse.”

Dayan nodded agreement. “I’ll get Yohai on it as soon as this session is over, Prime Minister.”

“Fine,” Eshkol said. “Now I want to take stock of civil defense. Obviously whatever we’ve done and counted on up to now won’t be enough. Galili [Israel Galili, the bushy-haired Minister of Information], I want you to take on this job. Make sure a total blackout is in effect. We’ll have to create extra shelters and, even more important, extra hospital space. Some of the larger buildings—perhaps the Hilton and Sheraton in Tel Aviv—would be best. But I’ll leave that to you. Will you supply us with a preliminary rundown within twenty-four hours?”

“Yes, of course, Prime Minister,” Galili said. Eshkol nodded, licked a stub of a pencil and drew a line through another item on the pad in front of him.

Slowly he read the next item on his list. “It seems clear to me from what Moshe said that it is imperative—perhaps even critical—that we get help from our friends overseas. Eban here has already made plans to return to Washington and New York. Realistically, however, it seems only fair to say—and I might add that I speak for Eban when I say this—that we can expect no concrete help from the United Nations. As for the United

States, Ambassador Harman has advised me that things will have to get a lot worse before Johnson commits himself. Eban, the way I see things, it will be your job to nudge him along. It is no longer a question of forcing the Straits of Tiran; now it is a question of our very life and death. And he has got to be made to realize this."

Eshkol turned to Golda Meir. "Golda, I'd like you to go to London. We don't expect the British to do anything unless the Americans lead, but I think we've got to try."

"Certainly," Mrs. Meir answered, crushing out her cigarette in an overflowing Bakelite ashtray. "I'll do whatever you and the Cabinet think I should do."

"The place we stand the best chance of getting help is France," Eshkol continued. "De Gaulle is under a lot of pressure internally to help us. We need Mirages and more spare parts for Mirages. These are in France. Now I propose"—Eshkol paused, sipped from a glass of water, and went on—"there is only one man in the room who could present our case to De Gaulle with the force needed, and that is Ben-Gurion."

The Prime Minister's request took Ben-Gurion, at the far end of the table, by surprise. "My place," the old man shot back coldly, "is here in Israel. And I don't intend to abandon the state, now or ever." Ben-Gurion thought his tone would end the matter there, but Eshkol, calmly and with dignity, repeated the request.

"There is no question of abandoning Israel, B.G.," he said. "Rather it is a question of the right man for the right job. None of us knows De Gaulle better than you do. None of us has his respect more than you do. A personal appeal—the fact that you flew there at the height of battle—will put considerably more pressure on him than a visit from anyone else I can think of. Besides, you can be there and back in the same day."

At this point Golda Meir leaned over to Ben-Gurion, put a hand on his arm, and whispered to him: "What was, was. If there ever was a time to forget our past differences, this is it."

Ben-Gurion paused a moment, nodded, then turned to Eshkol. "I don't like it, but I've never turned my back on duty. If the government insists"—Ben-Gurion looked around at the

Cabinet members as they nodded one by one—"then, of course, I'll go."

"Now," Eshkol said, "one other item. Before I go into it, I want to say that under no circumstances is anything we say here to get outside this room. This is doubly important for this last item. If our people get an idea that we have panicked—well, I need not say more."

Eshkol turned to Allon. "Yigal, you remember during the Second World War that we had plans to hide arms and ammunition for the Haganah if Rommel overran Palestine. As I recall, you had supply caches in the Carmel and in the Judaeen hills and around the Dead Sea."

"Yes, of course," Allon answered quietly. "How could one ever forget it?"

"Then I think you had better track down the plans and bring them up to date. By tonight at eleven, when I suggest we meet again, I want you to have some concrete ideas on what we can do if worst comes to worst—government-in-exile, resistance, evacuation, a coordinated underground in the mountains, that sort of thing." Eshkol smiled wanly and for a moment returned to his wry self. "Don't look so glum, *kinderlach*. We'll put these plans alongside the first set in a museum and show them all to our children's children some day—God willing."

Eshkol looked at his watch. "Gentlemen, I must speak to the Knesset in five minutes. Sapir [Pinhas Sapir, Finance Minister] will meet with the leaders of parliamentary factions after my speech and give them a rundown—make that a limited rundown—on our Cabinet session. If there is nothing else now"—Eshkol paused—"my dear friends, we all have much to do and little time to do it in. Let us now move to do it—and may God protect his people."

For a moment no one stirred. The shock of the day's events, the seriousness of the Cabinet meeting, seemed to paralyze the ministers around the table. Then, from a corner of the room, came the quiet, throaty, self-conscious sound of singing. Exactly who had started no one could tell. But within seconds, the members of the government of Israel were on their feet singing the song of hope—"Hatikva."

Tuesday, June Sixth

From the long, charcoal-black runway at El Arish in the Sinai peninsula, a scant seven minutes by air from Tel Aviv, silver MIG-21's with Egyptian markings on their wings climbed steeply into the clear night sky and roared off toward the northeast. Behind them, a great cloudburst of sand churned up by their jet wash floated back to the desert floor like a giant Bedouin canopy.

From Cairo West, flights of Russian-made TU-16 medium bombers lumbered down the field, eating up more runway than usual as they strained to lift their heavy bomb loads off the ground. The last TU-16, piloted by an overanxious and inexperienced lieutenant, never made it, and the flames from its wreck leaped hundreds of feet into the air, illuminating the skyline of downtown Cairo.

From Bir Gifgafa and Jebel Libni in the Sinai, from Abu Suweir and Fayid in the canal zone, from Imshas and Beni Suoir in the lush Nile Valley, from Amman in Jordan, from Damascus and Palmyra and Teykeo in Syria, from a field known only by its military designation—H-3—in Iraq, wave after wave of jet bombers and fighters converged on a strip of land roughly the size of New Jersey. By dawn of the second day of the war (4:37 Jerusalem time, 5:37 Cairo time), the House of David was being buffeted by one continuous, thunderous storm of destruction.

Twenty-nine-year-old Bashir Al-Kailani, a darkly handsome Egyptian Air Force captain, glanced down at the map on the clipboard strapped to his right knee, then rolled his stubby-

nosed MIG-17 slightly to port for a better view of the terrain below. Map reading had never been one of Al-Kailani's talents. During his eight months of training at a Soviet air base just south of Leningrad, he had been repeatedly warned by his Russian instructor that some day he was bound to bomb the wrong target. Until today, Al-Kailani had always scoffed at the idea. But now that he was engaged in actual combat, he was sorry he had not spent more time mastering the fine art of map reading.

Al-Kailani's right forefinger rested on a shaded area of the map representing Ashdod, a small, newly built port city north of the Gaza Strip, while his eye scanned the coastline for landmarks. Suddenly he thought he had found his target. Throwing his MIG into a steep bank, he plunged toward the city. At 4,500 feet, Ashdod's cement jetty and docks were visible in the cross hairs of his sight. And when the needle on the altimeter crossed 4,000, his gloved right hand squeezed the red trigger on the control stick—and set off the cameras slung under his wings.

For the next twenty-five minutes Al-Kailani's lone MIG ranged across Israel's heartland, the vast urban complex stretching from Ashdod in the south to Herzliya and Natanya in the northern Sharon Plain. As one of the half dozen Egyptian pilots assigned to photo reconnaissance, he had a front-row seat to the air war that raged over Israel. Before his eyes, swarms of Egyptian jets dove through mushrooming clouds of smoke and muted bursts of anti-aircraft fire to hammer away at the hated enemy. Though most of the Israeli planes had been destroyed during the first day of the war, a few score remained to challenge the Arab air armada. Rising in twos and threes, the Israeli Mystères and Mirages grappled with the MIG's with suicidal determination. The combatants, locked in supersonic dogfights, flashed in and out of Al-Kailani's field of vision like shooting stars. Here and there a wingless or tailless plane, trailing smoke, plummeted toward the earth. And through it all, Al-Kailani's cameras ground away, etching in silver nitrate a permanent record of the methodical mutilation of Israel.

Outside the entrance of Egypt's tightly guarded underground Air Force Operations Center in a Cairo suburb, a young lieutenant snapped smartly to attention. "May I see your identification, sir?" he said.

Muhammed Mahmoud, the Egyptian Air Force Chief of Staff, suppressed his irritation.

"Don't you recognize the general?" Mahmoud's aide-de-camp barked.

The young lieutenant stiffened. "Yes, sir," he answered crisply. "I recognize the general very well, sir. But my orders are to check all identification, whether I recognize the officer or not."

Mahmoud waved his aide aside and pulled out a laminated ID card from his breast pocket. The lieutenant, barely glancing at the pass, saluted and motioned Mahmoud through.

Inside the vast air-conditioned room, dozens of noncoms, their shirt sleeves rolled up above their elbows, stood behind dimly lit Plexiglas status boards recording in red and yellow and green grease pencils the ever-changing disposition of Egypt's Air Force. Sitting at a telephone console in front of the status boards, an operations team of three officers kept track of the incoming and outgoing flights, checked off target lists and made certain that the enormously complex air bombardment against Israel was proceeding according to schedule.

For a brief moment, Mahmoud watched the quietly efficient operation with satisfaction. But that was not why he had come. Walking to one end of the room, he pushed through a swinging door marked simply *Mukhabarat* (Intelligence). His sudden entrance caught Colonel Rabah Zbiri, a balding, middle-aged man with thick glasses, by surprise.

"I hadn't expected you so soon, General," Zbiri said. "I haven't had time to put the photos in order."

On Zbiri's desk stood piles of glossy eight-by-ten stills that had been edited out of thousands of feet of reconnaissance photographs. Among them were some pictures taken by Bashir Al-Kailani. General Mahmoud sat down in Zbiri's swivel chair and picked up an American-made Flash-o-Lens, a combination magnifying glass-flashlight.

“Okay,” the general said, “let’s see them.”

Nervously, Zbiri began to place the photographs in front of the Chief of Staff. As Mahmoud squinted through the lens, Zbiri provided a running commentary.

“The first one is the docks at Ashdod. The details are a little indistinct because of the heavy smoke.”

When the general looked up from the picture, Zbiri placed another one in front of him

“That’s the intersection of Ben Yehuda Street and Allenby Road in downtown Tel Aviv. Notice the flooding from the broken water mains.

“Oh, now this one is an excellent shot of the Shalom Tower after a direct hit demolished its top four stories. The Shalom Tower, as you know, General, is—or should I say, was—the tallest building in Israel.”

When the general didn’t laugh at his joke, Zbiri went on.

“Now here’s a scene outside of a well-known discotheque on Ben Yehuda Street owned by Mandy Rice-Davies. The wreckage was a bloodmobile.”

“Who is Mandy Rice-Davies?” Mahmoud asked.

“She was involved in Britain’s Profumo scandal a few years back,” Zbiri answered.

“Profumo?” Mahmoud said. “Oh, yes, I remember.” The general bent over the next picture.

“That was the Israeli nuclear reactor at Dimona.

“Apartments, General,” Zbiri said. “It was a new housing project just outside of Tel Aviv.

“That’s the Reading electric plant on the northern tip of Tel Aviv. We believe it is permanently out of commission.

“That’s the Ministry of Defense, and that’s the Central Army Command office building right next to it. As you can see—”

“Yes, yes,” Mahmoud said, “I can see. Next.”

“Next we have the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot.”

“It doesn’t look badly damaged to me,” Mahmoud said.

“Yes,” Zbiri said, “it has already been put on another target

list. In fact, if I'm not mistaken, it should have already been bombed by now."

Zbiri hesitated a second over the next picture.

"I just don't recognize that one, General. I'm sorry."

Zbiri quickly put another photograph in front of the general.

"That's the harbor at Haifa. Notice the two freighters blocking the mouth of the harbor."

"What nationality are they?" Mahmoud asked.

"We definitely identified one as Dutch. We're not sure about the other yet."

Mahmoud didn't pursue the matter.

"That's what the Jews call the Merkaz—the central business district of Haifa. We have reason to believe that a Syrian MIG crashed into it; perhaps you can make out the tail section there. It collapsed an entrance to the Haifa Metro. The death toll must have been in the hundreds, since the Jews are using the subway stations as air raid shelters."

Mahmoud looked up. "Do you have any overall civilian casualty estimates? And I don't mean for publication, I mean for me."

Zbiri took a small black notebook from his pocket. He opened it and began to add up some figures.

"I'll give you a city-by-city breakdown in a minute," he said.

"Don't bother," Mahmoud said. "Just give me totals."

Zbiri took a deep breath. "As of ten this morning, we calculate that at least two thousand two hundred Jews have been killed in the bombing, and that another ten thousand have been wounded. And these are conservative figures."

Though Mahmoud was not smiling, Zbiri felt confident that the general was pleased.

"I'm taking some of these pictures with me," Mahmoud said. "I'm sure President Nasser will want to see them."

At the swinging door, Mahmoud paused, thought a moment and then turned around.

"It occurs to me, Zbiri, that you'd better keep yourself available. We may need you to describe the pictures to the President.

And see if you can't get a better shot of the Weizmann Institute."

As Zbiri suspected, his estimates were on the conservative side. Even as he was rattling off the figures from his black book, Israeli civil defense officials like Rafi Rosenstein in Jerusalem were piecing together an even grimmer picture. By 11 A.M., in fact, the Israelis estimated that they had lost 2,800 in civilian deaths alone. For a country of 2.4 million people, the loss was staggering; proportionately, it was as if the United States had lost 233,000 civilians killed in less than forty-eight hours.

Inevitably the human loss had an enormous impact on the Israeli war effort. First it wreaked havoc with the army's rear-echelon support. Even more important, the knowledge that their wives and children were dying in the cities had an incalculable effect on the morale of the Israeli soldiers in the front lines. And this, in turn, only added to the overwhelming problems already faced by the army commanders.

Front by front, this was the bleak picture on the second day of the war:

The Northern Front

From his frontline headquarters near the Mahanayim airstrip in the Huleh Valley, Brigadier General David Eleazar, forty-two, the small, soft-spoken commander of the northern front, counted his blessings. True, there were precious few units under his command, and these were equipped with the oldest tanks in the Israeli Army. But this inequity, Eleazar understood, was the result of a carefully calculated strategic choice, for the Israeli High Command had nothing but utter contempt for the fighting ability of the Syrian Army. Indeed the Syrians, solidly entrenched in the Golan Heights—a rugged chain of mountains which rises from below sea level to 1,000 feet in a mere mile and a half—seemed content to lob shells down on the Galilee. Already the *kibbutzim* in the area were calling in their damage reports: Degania, the oldest communal settlement in Israel (Moshe Dayan's father was one of its founders), radioed that

its communal dining hall, its artificial ponds used to raise carp for *gefüllte* fish and some thirty dwellings had been destroyed. Ein Gev, one mile from the Syrian border, reported that twenty-five of its settlers had been killed and that its famous concert hall, a sort of Galilee Tanglewood, had been leveled. A dozen other settlements strung out under the Syrian guns in the northern tip reported similar damage and casualties.

The big question was whether the Syrians would launch a ground assault on the Galilee. Eleazar's staff thought they wouldn't. "They haven't spent years digging elaborate fortifications up there for nothing," one young captain sneered. "They won't have the nerve to come out and fight us."

This argument left Eleazar unconvinced. He knew that the Syrians had mobilized earlier in the month and now had 115,000 men under arms—60,000 of them, plus 300 tanks, massed near the border. "Gentlemen," he told them, "our friends in the hills must realize the significance of what happened to our air force yesterday. You can be sure those sixty thousand men aren't up there for the panoramic view of the Galilee." He paused. "They'll be down."

Against the Syrian force, Eleazar could muster four brigades—one of them an armored brigade under the command of Colonel Uri Rom, a forty-one-year-old *sabra* (native-born Israeli) who had gotten his armor training at Fort Knox. But if it came to a showdown, the Galilee would stand or fall on the resistance thrown up by the local *kibbutzim*.

At midmorning, Eleazar received an ominous report: Syrian engineers were clearing a path through the mined no-man's-land leading down from the heights. Shortly thereafter, a Syrian column composed of armor and infantry began moving against Dan in the northeastern corner of the country. Another Syrian task force, moving down from Tel Hilal and Dardara under cover of a dense morning mist, drove toward Ashmura. Long before they reached the Jewish settlements, however, Israeli artillery—called in by spotters in the *kibbutzim*—ripped through the Syrians. By noon, the halfhearted Syrian thrust on the Galilee seemed to have been stopped in its tracks.

Unknown to Eleazar, however, the Syrians had already be-

gun to make other plans. From Damascus, the Syrian High Command sent a secret message to the Lebanese government (which had given Israel little trouble since the 1948 war) asking for permission to launch a task force against the Galilee from Lebanese territory. Lebanon's Moslem Prime Minister Rashid Karami readily agreed. But the country's army commander, General Emile Bustani, a Christian, refused. "When you wear this uniform," Bustani bluntly informed the Prime Minister, "you can condemn our army to destruction. But while I wear it, you cannot." (Later Bustani pointedly let it be known that he would, in fact, be willing to commit the country's 11,000-man army and help the Syrians—but only if it became absolutely certain that the Arabs would win.)

The Central Front

Brigadier General Uzi Narkis, the scholarly commander of the central front, pored over his intelligence reports. No two of them, he noted in his diary with a certain apprehension, seemed to offer a complete picture of the Jordanian dispositions. But the experienced Narkis was able to piece together what he thought was an accurate battle order. Jordan's Arab Legion could muster nine infantry brigades, one mechanized brigade (equipped with M-113 armored personnel carriers), two independent tank brigades (equipped with American-made Patton tanks) and five artillery battalions (one of which was equipped with Long Toms). According to one unsubstantiated report, Jordan's 25th Infantry Brigade and 47th Tank Battalion (with forty Pattons) were massed on the Tulkarm-Kilkilya axis, just across the border from Israel's vulnerable, wasp-thin waist. Narkis also knew that Iraq had sent three infantry battalions and one armored battalion into Jordan—but he did not consider them to be much of a threat. What Narkis did not suspect was that Abdul Munim Riad, the Egyptian general dispatched to Amman by President Nasser, had considerably more influence over the Jordanian High Command than Israeli intelligence had reported. This influence was further enhanced by the fact that Riad had brought along with him two battalions of tough

Egyptian commandos, all of them veterans of Cairo's bloody campaign in Yemen.

Despite all this, Narkis, a Jerusalem-born *sabra* who was a graduate of France's prestigious Ecole de Guerre, was confident that his forces were adequate to handle the challenge. In camouflaged positions throughout Jerusalem itself, he had three infantry battalions and a mechanized battalion, plus a number of well-equipped home guard units. And to contain a Jordanian thrust toward the coastal plain, he had a brigade of armor under the command of Colonel Uri Ben-Ari, a combat-tested forty-two-year-old tanker, assembled just east of Tel Aviv at Ben Shemen.

Promptly at dawn the Jordanians attacked from several directions at once. Small-arms fire rattled through no-man's-land in Jerusalem as Arab Legionnaires began probing the Israeli defenses near the Old City walls and Government House, the UN's truce-supervision headquarters. From Jenin in the north, a light column began a tentative push toward Afula, but ran into stiff resistance from a home guard unit almost as soon as it set foot on Israeli soil.

On other fronts, however, the Jordanians—thanks largely to close air support—scored some startling successes. A strong column, backed by armor, pushed southward from the Latrun monastery and cut the main Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway. Narkis immediately dispatched a column of armor to break the Jordanian hold, but it was decimated by Arab jets before it could get into combat.

By far the most serious threat came in the twelve-mile-wide waist, where a strong Jordanian column (stiffened, as Narkis later discovered, with one of the two Egyptian commando battalions) pushed straight toward the sea from Tulkarm. Ben-Ari's armored brigade, strung out along six miles of highway as it raced to meet the thrust, was severely pounded by Jordanian Long Toms and Egyptian MIG's (called in by General Riad, who realized the importance of the battle). Ben-Ari's tanks—those that survived the air attacks—were committed to the struggle piecemeal, and the Jordanians swept everything before them. By midafternoon, the Legionnaires had scored

the first crucial ground victory of the war; the only thing that stood between them and the Mediterranean was a dozen or so Israeli settlements. Thus, for the first time in Israel's nineteen-year history, the nightmare vision of the Israeli High Command—that the state would be severed in half, with all the resulting havoc to communications and supplies that implied—seemed about to become reality.

The Southern Front

Brigadier General Yeshayahou Gavish, the slim, hawklike commander of Israel's Beersheba-based southern front, was engulfed in gloom. Normally a reflective man with unbounded self-confidence, Gavish had grown increasingly uneasy since the afternoon of the first day, when he had received Dayan's battle orders for Operation Yam Suf. The orders, he knew, would place an enormous burden on his three senior field commanders—Brigadier Generals Israel Tal, forty-two; Ariel Sharon, thirty-eight; and Avraham Yoffe, fifty-four. Each of them had been taught one thing over and over: when in doubt, strike, strike and strike again. Now, under Dayan's directive, they were expected to pull in their units to protect them from Arab air attacks, let the Egyptian columns plunge into Israel—and then pounce on them at such close range that Arab air superiority would be meaningless. All this, Gavish knew, required rigorous self-control, and if there was one thing that the average Israeli soldier didn't have in the heat of battle, it was self-control.

At first light on the second day of the war, the Egyptian gunners, who had been concentrating on targets adjacent to the border, lifted their sights and began zeroing in on new targets behind the Israeli front lines. Almost immediately, Arab troops poured out of their trenches screaming "Death to the Jews."

From Gaza, the 20th Palestinian Division, supported by the 7th Infantry Division, which had moved up the night before from Rafah and El Arish, pushed through no-man's-land and engaged Tal's tanks. To the south, the Egyptian 2d Division, supported by the 141st Armored Brigade, crashed head-on into

Sharon's and Yoffe's brigades. Still farther south, Task Force Shazali (named after its commander, Major General Saad Shazali, an American-trained veteran of Egypt's Yemen campaign) swept out of Wadi Kauraya just north of Kuntilla and crossed the border with 100 tanks. After a fierce fight, it overpowered the lone Israeli brigade guarding that sector and turned south to cut off the Israeli port of Eilat—by then a ghost-like town defended by only two battalions.

Despite the Arabs' air support, the Israelis held their own for a time. One of Tal's brigade commanders, Colonel Uri Baron, assumed personal command of a battalion of Patton snipers—tanks with gunners who were so accurate that they seldom missed their target—and took a heavy toll of Egyptian tanks at the border. "You should see them," Baron yelled into the tank's radio. "It's like knocking tin cans off a fence."

Sharon's tankers and half-tracks put up a fierce resistance until Egyptian bombers began dropping poison gas shells into their midst. Some of the Israeli troops had been provided with penlike plastic injectors in case the Egyptians, who were known to have used gas in Yemen, attacked with it again this time. But these were in short supply and, even when available, proved relatively ineffective. And there were not enough gas masks to go around. (The West Germans had airlifted 20,000 gas masks to Israel before the war, but they had not been distributed in time to the troops in the southern front.)

By noon, reports began to filter back from frontline commanders that the men were collapsing like flies. "The bodies smell from garlic, a sure sign they're using mustard gas," one brigade CO reported. "What shall we do?"

Gavish didn't mince words. "Pull back," he ordered. "But don't let them break your front—you've got to protect Tal's flank."

Slowly the weight of Egyptian armor began to tell on Tal as well. Each time the Israelis knocked out an Egyptian tank, there was another to take its place. But when a MIG scored a hit on one of the Israeli tanks, no replacement was available. By mid-afternoon, Tal began to fall back on the border settlements that ringed Gaza.

As the battle raged on, the inexperience of the Israelis with Yam Suf tactics began to show. Units were committed too early—or too late. Junior officers rushed pell-mell into battle. In previous wars, such tactics had paid off. This time, however, the results were catastrophic.

Scores of Egyptian jets cartwheeled overhead, searching for targets of opportunity. Inevitably they found them. Dozens of supply caravans, carrying everything from fresh oranges to jerry cans of fuel, were smashed on the bare desert roads. Reserve units rushing forward to plug gaps in the lines were decimated. Communications were thrown into turmoil: units that no longer existed were ordered into battle, while others that hadn't lost a man sat and waited for orders that were sent—but never arrived.

Eventually the inescapable logic of Israel's dwindling fuel reserves had a profound effect on the course of the battle. Perhaps Israeli soldiers could go without oranges, but their tanks could not run on nervous energy. One by one, they ground to a halt, their fuel tanks bone dry.

By sundown, the Egyptians had made spectacular gains. Task Force Shazali was rolling past King Solomon's mines on the way to Eilat. Division Sharon, shattered by Egyptian gas attacks, beat a hasty retreat to Sheizaf. One Egyptian column with more than 100 highly maneuverable T-55 tanks broke out of Gaza and started up the famous Via Maris, the traditional invasion route from Egypt that Napoleon had followed in 1799. Negba and Yad Mordehai, two villages just over the frontier that had stopped Egyptian armor and infantry in 1948, were overrun. Yad Mordehai's battered white water tower, a grim reminder purposely left standing as a symbol of the settlement's costly victory in 1948, was reduced to rubble. And long lines of Egyptian infantry, supported by spinach-green tanks and armored cars, began to close in on the ring of *kibbutzim* around the Gaza Strip.

In Gaza, the news of the Arab advances blasted out raucously from chains of loudspeakers strung along the streets. "The *jihād* is successful. Our hands are near the heart of Palestine. Our

eagles, O brothers, have destroyed the enemy's planes and set fire to his homes. Brothers, we shall soon haul down the Zionist flag. The hour of justice is at hand."

Each announcement brought hoarse cheers from the large crowds gathered on the broad lawn in front of the headquarters of General Munam Abdul Husaini, the Egyptian military governor of the Gaza Strip. During the first day of the war, the people of Gaza had huddled in their homes as Israeli artillery shelled the seaside Arab city. But by the afternoon of the second day, the Israeli guns had been knocked out of action, and the local population—emboldened by this silence—took to the rooftops of the beige-colored, mud-and-cement houses of the city to watch as wave after wave of Egyptian planes roared in from the Mediterranean to strafe the twelve Israeli settlements lining the strip's border to the west.

While clouds of smoke spread all along the horizon, troops of the 20th Palestinian Division spearheaded the ground assault. Supported by tank columns, the troops—including units of the Egyptian-trained Palestine Liberation Army recruited by Cairo from among the 300,000 refugees in the Gaza Strip—advanced from Gaza City and Rafah toward the Israeli settlements of Nahal Oz, Nirim, Ein Hasheloshah and Kissufim. As the Egyptian tanks and troop carriers rumbled across the green fields and sandy stretches dividing the two warring sides, handfuls of Israeli half-tracks and Sherman tanks that had not been hit by Egyptian planes or artillery emerged from their hiding places in the eucalyptus groves and advanced in open formation in a suicidal attempt to stem the tide. But even as they reached the charred wrecks of other Israeli armor that had attempted previous defensive runs, the weight of the massed Egyptian force striding forth to meet them brought most of them to a quick and fiery halt. It was, as one Israeli commander radioed back, "like fighting a flood with sponges."

In the *kibbutzim* themselves, women and children huddled beneath the ground in bunkers lined with corrugated steel. Above, the men of the *kibbutz* joined the regular Israeli army units that had retreated into the settlements for a last-ditch fight.

Back in Gaza, the crowds of refugees in the dusty streets turned into an unruly mob. One refugee, dressed in a dirty *jellaba*, climbed on top of a cement pylon adorned with a poster of Ahmed Shukairy's puffy face.* "Brothers, brothers," he cried, "our soldiers advance, the smoke blinds the enemy. By Allah, we have sworn to return to our homes. By Allah, we have sworn to take what is ours. Come—*Itbah el Yehud* [Kill the Jews]." At that, the crowd, picking up hundreds of followers as it went, swarmed toward the city's marketplace, past the famous statue of the *fellah* pointing his vengeful finger at Palestine, past the Gaza railway station and on toward the frontier.

The refugees, in a frenzy of excitement, raced past the rows of cactus bushes at the edge of the city and started down the long-unused road between Gaza and Nahal Oz. In the confusion, thousands pushed forward, hysterically shoving others aside. Some refugees forced off the road detonated mines in the adjacent fields. The explosions only spurred the others on. They plunged down the narrow, weed-cluttered road, past a deserted white and blue UN Emergency Force observation tower, on toward Nahal Oz. "Let them go," shrugged one Egyptian colonel watching from the turret of a tank. "They will find nothing but dead bodies when they get there."

In the cluttered radio shack of the U.S.S. *Liberty*, Radioman First Class Henry W. Lawson, nineteen, glanced up at the large round clock on the bulkhead, then swiveled in his seat, faced an old Underwood and typed: "1140—no signal." At that moment his relief, Herbert London, a lanky young Negro from Harlem, pushed through the green curtain into the room.

"What's for chow?" Lawson asked, beginning to remove his earphones.

"My watch doesn't start till eleven forty-five hours, baby," London said. "Anyway, it's chicken à la king."

Lawson pretended to vomit in his hand. Suddenly he pressed both hands to his earphones and swiveled back to the typewriter.

* Ahmed Shukairy—the bald, bellicose leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

“Hey, London, do me a favor,” he said. “Switch on the recorder. I think I have a high-grade ECM [Electronic Counter Measures] intercept.”

TRANSCRIPT RECORDED ABOARD U.S.S. LIBERTY OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN PRESIDENT GAMAL ABDEL NASSER AND KING HUSSEIN, JUNE 6, 1967, 11:43 TO 11:46

NASSER: Hello, hello. How are you, my brother? Do you hear me?

HUSSEIN: Yes, yes. Your brother hears you. Hello.

NASSER: Does the battle go well along your front?

HUSSEIN: Yes, it goes beyond our hopes, *Sayidat El Rayis* [Mr. President]. The armies of the Hashimite Kingdom are fighting bravely and are advancing with steady success.

NASSER: By God, you say your armies are advancing, and I tell you we are fighting with all our strength, and we have battles going on on every front, and if we had any trouble in the fighting, it does not matter. We will overcome despite this. God is with us.

HUSSEIN: [Answer unintelligible.]

NASSER: Hello. I say to my brother that even now we are pushing the Jews into the sea and restoring the usurped land. This is our pledge to the Arab nation.

HUSSEIN: Yes, I hear you, *Sayidat El Rayis*.

NASSER: Will Your Majesty apprise me of the details of battle?

HUSSEIN: Hello, yes. My legions have already cut into the heart of Israel and are moving toward the sea north of Tel Aviv. My planes command the skies over Jerusalem, and soon I hope to strike there, perhaps by tomorrow.

NASSER: You say you are advancing on every front. By God, I say that we are doing the same. My air force has destroyed the enemy's air force, and our planes now strike at the Zionist cities and supply lines. Our units are advancing from Gaza and northward in the Negev. In the south we've already cut off Eilat.

HUSSEIN: Yes, yes. My commanders in Aqaba have reported this. It is a great day. Our losses, though, are heavy.

I hope you will appreciate that our losses are already heavy. But triumph is inevitable [rest garbled].

NASSER: This is understood, Your Majesty. Has Your Majesty had confirmation of yesterday's count of Israeli air losses? Has this been confirmed by photographs?

HUSSEIN: Oh yes, my brother. I have seen them myself. There is no mistake. We have swept them from the sky . . . [garbled]. We must not pause for even a breath. But what of the Americans? Have you heard from the Americans?

NASSER: I have no fear of them. We must not let anything stand in our way. We shall face that, too, if need be. Do you agree?

HUSSEIN: Yes, I agree we must go on, of course. *Sayidat El Rayis*, if you have something or any idea at all . . . at any time.

NASSER: A thousand thanks. Be well, my brother. We shall meet in Tel Aviv.

The conversation with Hussein left Nasser curiously uneasy. What did Hussein mean when he said that his losses were heavy? Was he hinting that the Jordanian Army was about to run out of steam? It was precisely to prevent this from happening that Nasser had ordered General Riad and the two battalions of Egyptian commandos to the Jordanian front.

Nasser jabbed at a yellow intercom buzzer on his desk. An instant later his personal secretary, Mahmoud Fahim, entered the room.

"Mahmoud," Nasser asked, "have we heard from Riad recently?"

"No, *Sayidat El Rayis*," Fahim replied. "As I understand it, Riad reports directly to Marshal Amer."

"Then get me Amer on the telephone," Nasser said. "And have some lunch sent in, will you?"

Nasser sat back in his black leather upholstered swivel chair and stretched. What day is this? he suddenly wondered. He looked at his desk calendar. Tuesday, the sixth. My God, was it only Sunday! On that day, his wife, Tahia, had helped him

pack six suitcases at their home in Cairo's Manchiet el Bakri district. Three of the bags were flown to Mankabad, the military camp in Upper Egypt that Nasser had chosen once before—during the 1956 Suez crisis—as a last-ditch retreat in case he was forced to flee Cairo. The three other valises went with him to his headquarters on the island of Gezira in the center of Cairo. There, on the top floor of a handsome, three-story gray stone building erected by King Farouk as a mooring station for his pleasure boats, an elaborate war office had been fitted out for the President. Army engineers had carted in his seven-foot-long desk and installed a telephone console with ten outlets—the first of which connected Nasser's war room directly to the underground bunker at the Abassia army command post where Field Marshal Abdel Hakim Amer, the commander of Egypt's armed forces, directed the entire military operation.

Now the telephone button flashed slowly on and off. Nasser lifted the receiver to his ear. "Abdel?" he asked.

"Yes, *Sayidat El Rayis*. What a glorious day for Egypt!"

There was no mistaking Amer's mood. Originally the slim army chief had calculated that the first stage of the war—Operation Khanq (Smother), the destruction of Israel's air force—would take at least three days to complete. But now that it was apparent that Egypt and its Arab allies had carried out a stunning aerial coup within a matter of a few brief hours, Amer's natural skepticism melted away.

Nasser's reaction was far more reserved. Above all, he wondered whether he could trust the roseate reports he had received from his commanders. Even the piles of aerial photos delivered personally by Air Force Chief of Staff Muhammed Mahmoud failed to dispel Nasser's haunting doubts. It was all too good to be true. After two bitter defeats at the hands of Israel in less than twenty years, Nasser had a nearly superstitious dread of Israel's military prowess. And even if the reports were true, surely the crafty Jews would bounce back to victory.

"Abdel, have you heard from Riad recently?" Nasser asked.

"I received a situation report from him an hour ago, *Sayidat El Rayis*. It is apparent that the Jordanians are doing well. According to Riad, one column is threatening to cut the road to

Tel Aviv near Latrun, and another is striking for the coast just north of Tel Aviv. However, one column that tried to reach Afula lost heart and turned back.”

“Were they our commandos?” Nasser wanted to know.

Amer laughed quietly. “Of course not,” he said. “Riad’s commandos were divided between the two successful columns, *Sayidat El Rayis*. Had they been with the troops at Afula, the Jordanians would not have turned back so quickly.”

“Just as I thought,” Nasser said. “And what of the Sinai?”

Nasser could hear Amer shuffling through some papers. “Things are going slowly—but well, *Sayidat El Rayis*. The Israelis are fighting fiercely on every front, but all of our units are making progress. We are losing a considerable number of tanks to snipers at Gaza. And one thrust from Abu Aweigla seems to be bogged down at the border for the moment. But I have executed Contingency Plan Pigeon [According to Contingency Plan Pigeon: “Army commanders may order the use of gas attacks at their discretion if, in their judgment, such use is crucial to the success of a battle”]. I should be able to give you a better picture of what is developing by midafternoon.”

Nasser paused for a moment, then told Amer, “My friend, be diligent. If the fighting is too light, if success is too easy, beware of a trap.” Even now, Nasser could not rid himself of all his doubts.

“The fighting is hard, *Sayidat El Rayis*. And we will watch with eagle eyes for a trap.”

Nasser put the receiver back on the hook with a sense of relief. Somehow Amer’s cautious optimism was far more convincing than Hussein’s glowing reports. Suddenly a feeling of elation swept over Nasser. For the first time in nineteen years, he really believed that Israel could be defeated.

A knock on the door interrupted his train of thought. A servant carrying a silver tray entered with lunch—an imitation Dresden bowl full of *ful* (Egyptian beans), a silver-plated pot brimming with syrup-thick Turkish coffee and a thermos of mixed fruit juices. Nasser, a diabetic, had an unslakable thirst. Right behind the servant came Fahim.

“*Sayidat El Rayis*,” the secretary announced, “Deputy Premier

Mohieddin and Deputy Premier Sabry are waiting to see you.”

Nasser flashed a brilliant smile. “Let them in, Mahmoud, let them in,” he said.

Now thoroughly self-confident, Nasser felt that there was no need for him to be on the defensive with his two top lieutenants. Both men had violently opposed the war—if for entirely different reasons—and their last few meetings had been stormy and acrimonious. Nasser was almost boyishly curious to see how Mohieddin and Sabry would react to the news of the Arabs’ success.

Zakaraya Mohieddin, a tall, thin man of aristocratic bearing, was Vice-President of the United Arab Republic and Nasser’s heir apparent. A trained economist who was in charge of the day-to-day administration of the country, Mohieddin had argued that the war would, at the very least, be ruinously wasteful of Egypt’s meager resources. In foreign affairs, Mohieddin was basically pro-West, and his greatest fear was that the *jihad* against Israel—no matter how it eventually turned out—would sever his country’s few remaining links with Western Europe and the United States.

In almost every respect, Mohieddin and Aly Sabry were a study in contrasts. A short, roly-poly man, Sabry was a dogmatic Marxist who held the post of secretary general of Egypt’s Arab Socialist Union. Where Mohieddin was cultured and reserved, Sabry was crude and bombastic. As Egypt’s chief spokesman for closer ties with the Soviet Union, Sabry feared that the war would alienate his friends in Moscow, who had repeatedly warned him that Nasser was biting off more than he could chew.

Ironically, their combined influence over Nasser was such that Mohieddin and Sabry could probably have dissuaded the Egyptian leader from going to war. But because of their conflicting ideologies, temperaments and ambitions, they could not agree on a common course of action. The result was that in the days before June 5, Nasser played Mohieddin and Sabry against each other and effectively canceled their moderating advice.

The door to Nasser’s office opened, and the two men—Sabry leading the way—entered the spacious room. Nasser got up from

his seat, thrust out his jaw in a familiar public pose and, ignoring Sabry for the moment, looked into Mohieddin's eyes.

"Zakaraya," he exclaimed, "why so glum? This is a time for rejoicing. Amer was right after all. We could tackle the Jews. By God, by this time tomorrow we may even have Faluja!" *

Nasser's laughter echoed through the room, but it only made Mohieddin more sullen. "I hope," Mohieddin said, looking directly back into Nasser's eyes, "that all these Israeli planes we destroyed don't turn out to be so many cardboard dummies." Nasser's face hardened. After Egypt's defeat in the 1956 Suez war, Nasser widely broadcast a claim that British and French pilots had been tricked into bombing dummy cardboard planes on Cairo's airstrips. Few knowledgeable Egyptians had been taken in by that lie, and Mohieddin was obviously warning Nasser that he did not intend to be fooled now.

Sabry, who seldom missed an opportunity to score points against his rival, spoke up. "The trouble with you, Zakaraya," he said, "is that you've never had any stomach for war. Would you have preferred that we waited until Dayan attacked us? Or perhaps we should have waited until the Israelis developed an atomic bomb before we went to war with them?"

Mohieddin ignored the barb. But Nasser, who enjoyed baiting Sabry, picked up the thread of the argument. "My dear Aly," he said, pointing a finger at the squat Sabry, "you are the last one who should be criticizing Mohieddin for his caution. I remember you came to me a week ago, wringing your hands because your Russian friends were certain we couldn't carry off a first strike."

Mohieddin was repelled by this display of one-upmanship at such a critical moment. He walked across the room and leaned both of his palms on Nasser's desk. "Gamal," he said as forcefully as he knew how, "what is a friend for, if not to dampen enthusiasm at the right moment? It is not the Russians I'm con-

* During the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the Israeli forces, though badly outnumbered, trapped 4,000 Egyptian troops—including the then Majors Nasser and Mohieddin—in a forty-eight-square-mile area north of Beersheba called the Faluja Pocket. To Gamal Nasser and the young officers who later joined him in overthrowing King Farouk, Faluja became a symbol of the humiliating defeat in Palestine.

cerned about. It is not even the Israelis anymore. It is the Americans. We cannot expect them to cover their eyes while we occupy Palestine. There is an election in America next year. Johnson cannot sit back and do nothing. The Jews will cut off his campaign money. This is clear. Already the Sixth Fleet has assembled off Crete. Nolte [U.S. Ambassador Richard Nolte] called me late last night and told me that Johnson was under enormous pressure to intervene. Gamal"—here Mohieddin slapped his palms on the desk—"we cannot fight the Americans and the Israelis, too. Even Sabry over there will admit that!"

Before Sabry could argue the point, Mohieddin went on. "Gamal, my friend, for years I have watched as we forced ourselves into positions from which only we suffer. What happened to our dream of freeing this nation, of developing its economy, of giving every *fellah* more to eat than bread on workdays and *ful* on feast days? Every day this war goes on costs us money. Even if the Americans don't intervene, we will suffer. Occupying Israel will cost us money. How will we feed two million Jews? They are not Yemeni tribesmen. Shall we turn Palestine over to that fool Shukairy?"

Nasser was noncommittal. "What would you have me do?" he asked.

"I say agree to a cease-fire tomorrow morning. We have smashed the Israeli Air Force. We have blunted Dayan's army. We have already practically reduced Israel to the territory it had under the original partition plan. Such an Israel—unarmed, wounded, diminished in size—is not a viable nation-state. It will wither on the vine and die. You, meanwhile, will have emerged as the uncontested leader of the Arab world. Your restraint will also win you applause in the West. And the need to keep you restrained will win you even more leverage in the West than you had before."

Mohieddin backed away from the desk and walked over to a large sandbagged window. Nasser turned to Sabry. "And you, my friend, what would you have me do?" Despite his personal dislike of Sabry, Nasser valued his advice. Sabry's arguments, Nasser knew, were likely to be well thought out.

"I say you can't turn back now," Sabry said. "The Americans

may make noises, but they can't intervene. Even if they had the troops available, they would think twice about sending them in. Those ten Soviet ships moving through the Dardanelles may be no match for the Sixth Fleet, but they will have a psychological effect of ten times ten ships. I talked to Vinogradov [Soviet Ambassador Sergei Vinogradov] before I came here this morning. Frankly, he is worried that Moscow may be dragged into a confrontation with the United States. But I had the strong feeling that he wasn't altogether unhappy with our victory in the air yesterday. After all, Arabs may be flying the planes and driving the tanks, but this is the first real test of Soviet arms since Korea. As for the Americans, if you listen to the BBC, you'll discover that for the moment they are concentrating their attention on the very safe battlefield of the United Nations.

"We must gamble," Sabry continued, "that the Russians will keep the Americans at bay while we complete the job that we have begun. Anyway, are we to kowtow to American threats? Are we going to let the imperialists decide our destiny? Now is the great opportunity to redeem the Arab nation in history."

Mohieddin could scarcely contain himself. "Save your rhetoric for the crowds," he snapped.

Sabry knew he had won the argument. "I would not discount the crowds, my friends," he said. "Even now, tens of thousands of people are roaming through the streets. And for once, no one has organized their demonstrations. They are convinced we will triumph. The vendors have even stopped selling blue paper.* Gamal, the crowds are chanting your name. And it is your name they will be shouting in every Arab capital from Algiers to Baghdad. But if you lose your nerve, then I am not sure whose name they will shout."

Sabry wondered if he had gone too far. It was one thing to argue with Nasser; it was another to threaten him.

For a few moments, Nasser seemed lost in his own thoughts. Finally he walked over to the window and stood next to Mohieddin. Any gleeful triumph he might have felt had long

* For weeks, street vendors throughout Egypt had been selling blue paper to put over automobile headlights and windows to blacken out the city in the event of Israeli air raids.

since evaporated. "Zakaraya," he said, resting a hand on Mohieddin's shoulder, "I understand your concern. It comes from an honest heart. But, brother, our moment has come and there is no turning back. We have struggled and planned for this day for nineteen years. My Arab brothers would curse my name for nineteen times nineteen years if I turned back now. Zakaraya, it only appears that I have a real choice. But in actual fact I have no choice at all. A month ago I did not seriously plan that we would war with the Jews again. But fate has thrust victory into my hands. Should I then return it, saying, 'I have neither heart nor stomach for success?'"

Nasser paused for a moment. Then he flashed a broad, toothy smile and went on. "On my instructions, Amer is continuing with the offensive. And we shall win!"

"*Insh Allah* [if God wills it]," Mohieddin murmured quietly. Sabry snorted with satisfaction.

A quiet knock at the door broke the tension. Fahim entered the room, carrying a small brass tray of tiny china cups half filled with steaming Turkish coffee.

"Ahhh, Mahmoud," Nasser said, flashing another broad grin, "I think we will have a movie tonight."

"Tonight, *Sayidat El Rayis*?" Fahim asked incredulously.

"Yes, tonight," said Nasser. "A cowboy movie would be fine."

Almost from the moment the Security Council scheduled its 1,349th meeting at the urgent request of both Israel and Egypt, Jews had begun converging on United Nations headquarters at Turtle Bay. Some waited in line for hours at the visitors' entrance of the low, sweeping General Assembly Building, hoping to get tickets for one of the 232 public seats in the council chamber. Thousands more milled around in the normally deserted plaza in front of the towering glass and marble Secretariat Building; by 10 A.M., New York's Deputy Police Commissioner Jacques Nevard estimated, the crowd had swelled to nearly 14,000. They came, for the most part, from the New York metropolitan area, though some had journeyed from as far away as Boston and Cincinnati. There was one delegation of twenty-seven middle-aged women from the Rockville Center

chapter of Hadassah. From Paterson, New Jersey, Temple Emanuel sent eighty members of its congregation in a chartered bus. An entire smoker on the New Haven Railroad's 8:04 A.M. express out of Larchmont was filled with Jewish business executives. Yeshivas in the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn closed for the day and thousands of their pupils, wearing embroidered *yarmulkes*, joined the throng. All of them—from the prosperous businessman to the bearded rabbinical student—shared a sense of panic and helplessness. Yet they hoped that their mere presence outside the UN would somehow influence the delegates inside.

Despite its size, the crowd made surprisingly little noise. Above the murmur of voices could be heard the distant rumble of the city's traffic, punctuated now and then by a snapping sound as one of the flags of the UN's 123 member states caught the warm breeze blowing off the East River. Once the excitement of belonging to such a vast assemblage had worn off, there was little to do but wait. Hundreds had brought along transistor radios to follow the proceedings inside; for the benefit of others standing nearby, they turned up the volume. At one minute past eleven, WINS announcer Paul Smith paused for a station break, then switched back to the council chamber, where India's ambassador, Gopalaswami Parthasarathi, was speaking.

“And so, Mr. President, as the report from General [Indar J.] Rikhye indicates, the shelling of the Gaza City district by forces of the Israeli Army resulted in a direct hit on United Nations Emergency Force headquarters in that city, and I cite the report directly: ‘The shelling caused the deaths of thirteen troops of the Republic of India serving in the force and the injury of five others, whose situation is currently described as grave.’ End of quotation. Now, Mr. President, such action is indicative of a pattern of aggression and wanton disavowal of the Articles . . .”

As Ambassador Parthasarathi droned on, seemingly oblivious to the real drama being enacted in the Middle East, the other representatives around the horseshoe-shaped table hardly heard a word. Sitting in front of the council's twenty-six-foot-long Per

Krohg mural, Denmark's Foreign Minister Hans Tabor (President for the month of June) and Secretary General U Thant engaged in whispered conversation about a procedural matter. U.S. Ambassador Arthur J. Goldberg, his cotton-white head bent over the table, put the finishing touches on the draft of his statement. Mohammed Awad el Kony, Egypt's bald, bony-faced ambassador, stared from deep-set eyes off into space. Russia's Nikolai Fedorenko, thin-lipped and serious, twisted in his seat to confer with an aide. And Israel's foreign minister, Abba Eban, looking somewhat haggard and drawn after his hurried flight the night before from the Sde Dov airstrip north of Tel Aviv, shuffled through a pile of notes.

"I would therefore request," the Indian ambassador concluded, "that urgent action be taken to condemn this provocation and to provide suitable reparations to the families of the Indian troops killed in the Israeli attack. Thank you, Mr. President."

Behind soundproof glass booths, interpreters finished their simultaneous translations into French, Russian, Chinese and Spanish. Minutes passed, and still Tabor and Thant continued whispering to each other. In his hand, the Secretary General held a telegram from General Odd Bull, the commander of the UN's peace-keeping forces in the Middle East, informing him that Jordanian troops had captured the UN's Government House headquarters in no-man's-land between the two sectors of Jerusalem. Indignant at this assault on UN property, Tabor was trying to convince Thant that he should publicly disclose the contents of the telegram and demand that Jordan return Government House immediately. Inexplicably Thant wanted to circulate a private memo on the matter to the fifteen-member council after the meeting was over. And so the whispering went on until a compromise was finally reached: the Secretary General agreed to express his displeasure over the capture of Government House, but he refused to assign any blame because, as he said, "it will not serve any useful purpose at this critical juncture."

After Thant had spoken, Tabor gave the floor to El Kony. In a deep, resonant voice, the Egyptian ambassador sought to as-

sign complete blame for the outbreak of the war to Israel. "Radar," he fairly boomed, "does not lie! If anyone in this chamber is still in doubt, let him come to Cairo, come to the United Arab Republic, and we will show you proof. The logs from our radar sightings on the morning of June 5 are conclusive proof that Israeli aircraft launched a premeditated attack on our cities and airstrips at the very moment when our diplomats were still desperately trying to find a way of avoiding war. We are a peace-loving people, Mr. President. But in the face of this Zionist aggression, the great Arab family of nations had no other choice but to respond with a mighty blow. And this we have done. Let history show the shameful record of the Israelis. It will remain vivid in the minds of our children's children. Again today the evidence indicates beyond a shadow of a doubt that the aggression was a calculated, premeditated and carefully planned one."

Next came Abba Eban, and both inside the council chamber and outside on the street, an expectant hush fell over his listeners. In an impeccable British accent, in phrases almost Churchillian in their cadence, Eban proceeded to spin a rich tapestry of history, pride and human agony.

"Mr. President," he began, "I have just come from Jerusalem to tell the Security Council that Israel has reached a somber hour. Two days ago, there was peril for Israel wherever it looked. Its manpower had been hastily mobilized. Its economy and commerce were beating with feeble pulse. Its streets were dark and empty. There was an apocalyptic air of approaching peril. But not entirely alone, we were buoyed up by an unforgettable surge of public sympathy across the world. Friendly governments expressed the rather ominous hope that Israel would manage 'to live.' Today the dominant theme of our condition is solitude and danger, and the hope that Israel will 'live' has grown ever more forlorn.

"I invite every peace-loving state represented here to consider that the subject of our discussion is the Middle East, its past agony and its future hope. We speak of a region whose destiny has profoundly affected the entire human experience. In the heart of that region, at the very center of its geography and

history, lives a very small nation called Israel. This nation gave birth to the current of thoughts which have fashioned the life of the Mediterranean world and of vast regions beyond. It was re-established, through a free and open vote conducted by this very organization, as the home and sanctuary of a people which has seen six million of its children exterminated in the greatest catastrophe ever endured by a family of the human race.

“I suggest that the time has arrived to accept Israel’s nationhood as a fact. Here is the only state in the international community which has the same territory, speaks the same language and upholds the same faith as it did three thousand years ago. Yet, even as I speak to you, this continuity is being challenged by Arab bombs and Arab bullets. I need not here itemize the tragic toll of the war. Suffice it to say, the small State of Israel is valiantly struggling for its very existence.

“And if, as everybody knows to be the fact, the universal conscience is now violently shaken at the prospect of danger to Israel, it is not only because there is a danger to a state. It is also because the state is Israel, with all that this ancient name evokes, teaches, symbolizes and inspires. How grotesque would be an international community which found room for one hundred twenty-two other sovereign units and which did not come to the defense of the sovereignty of that people which had given nationhood its deepest significance and its most enduring grace. Mr. President, I call upon this august body to commit itself to the defense of Israel.”

As Eban finished speaking, the public gallery burst into cheers and applause, and Tabor, after waiting a sympathetic moment longer than he had to, gaveled the chamber back to order. It was now nearly 12:45 P.M. Since Arthur Goldberg was scheduled to speak next, Tabor passed him a note asking for his consent to adjourn for lunch until 2:30. Readily Goldberg agreed.

Goldberg, in fact, welcomed the pause. All morning long, as the debate in the council proceeded in stylized fashion, his aides had been feeding him messages from Washington describing Israel’s increasingly desperate plight. Originally, of course, Goldberg had hoped to obtain a cease-fire linked to a withdrawal

of both sides to their positions prior to the outbreak of the war. Predictably enough, now that the Russians had scented success, they balked at any suggestion of a withdrawal by the Arabs. And the United States realized that the sooner it succeeded in getting a simple cease-fire resolution adopted by the council, the better would be its chances of salvaging something for the Israelis from the wreckage of war.

“The President,” read one message to Goldberg from the White House, where Lyndon Johnson was still in bed with a fever, “is willing to accept a cease-fire without a withdrawal as long as it is clear that such a cease-fire is *a first step** toward restoring peace in the Middle East.”

Thus, as the delegates filed out of the council chamber to go upstairs to the private fourth-floor dining room, Goldberg walked over to Nikolai Fedorenko and put a hand on his shoulder.

“If you can spare a few minutes,” said Goldberg, “I’d like to have a chat with you.”

Dressed in an immaculately tailored blue suit and polka dot bow tie, Fedorenko looked more like a professor of romance languages at a small American college than a veteran Communist diplomat. But this mild and modest image, carefully cultivated by Fedorenko for its effect, was thoroughly deceptive. To his colleagues and the press, Fedorenko had a well-earned reputation for being a sarcastic, condescending egocentric. His grating personality did not serve either him or his country well in the polished atmosphere of the UN, and since coming to the world organization he had failed to score a single significant victory. Now, however, he was presented with a golden opportunity to change all that.

In nearly faultless English, Fedorenko dryly replied, “The pleasure will be all mine, Arthur.”

Almost unnoticed, the two men walked out of the council chamber, past a battery of public telephones and into the small South Delegates’ Lounge. There, in front of Picasso’s blue, gold and umber tapestry, “Femme Sur L’Echelle [Woman on

* Emphasis in the original.

the Ladder],” Fedorenko paused for a moment to speak with an aide. Then he and Goldberg walked into the Quiet Room and closed the door behind them.

“I wanted to speak to you,” Goldberg said, as soon as they had settled into comfortable chairs, “because I thought we could work out something mutually agreeable on this problem.”

Fedorenko crossed one leg over the other, brought his hands together so that just his fingertips were touching—and said nothing.

“Don’t you agree?” Goldberg asked, trying to draw Fedorenko out.

“I’m listening,” Fedorenko said. He was enjoying the interview immensely, savoring the thought of how he would describe this scene in his cable tonight to Moscow.

From years of experience in similar tough bargaining situations, Goldberg knew just how self-satisfied Fedorenko must feel. Undoubtedly the Russian believed that he held all the trump cards. To begin with, then, Goldberg tried to shake Fedorenko’s self-confidence.

“The thing that concerns me most,” Goldberg said, “is that this situation doesn’t slip from our grasp. I’m sure it’s no secret to you that the longer this war goes on, the more pressure the President’s going to be under to come in on the side of Israel. Personally, I think it would be a tragic mistake for either of us to get directly involved. A ghastly mistake.”

Fedorenko immediately grasped the implied threat. He was almost certain that Goldberg was trying a bluff; otherwise, he reasoned, the American would be more explicit. Nonetheless, he had his instructions, too. The Soviet Foreign Ministry was worried that the United States would enter the war to save Israel, and Fedorenko was expected to maneuver the Americans back from the brink. Yet Fedorenko realized that to be effective, he would have to *appear* unwilling to give Goldberg any diplomatic concessions. That way, when Goldberg got what he wanted—a cease-fire resolution—the Americans would feel as though they had scored a significant victory.

“There are also pressures in Moscow, you know,” Fedorenko

said. "I've lived many years in both our countries, Arthur, and I'm perfectly aware of how these pressures have to be weighed against the risks."

"Agreed, agreed," Goldberg replied, hoping that he had already gained a point or two in the exchange. Now he was prepared to try a finesse. "That's why I sent you over a copy of our draft resolution linking the cease-fire with a withdrawal. As you say, we've both got a stake in defusing this thing quickly."

"Out of the question," Fedorenko snapped.

Patiently Goldberg sprung what he thought was his trap. "Well," he said, "I suppose you could veto—if you didn't mind vetoing a resolution that was clearly aimed at trying to restore peace. But personally, I think that kind of move would only redouble the pressure on the President." Goldberg paused for a moment. "I see another way out of this which both of us could accept."

"What?" Fedorenko asked.

"We'll accept a simple cease-fire," said Goldberg, "so long as it's made clear that it is only a first step in the direction of a settlement." This, of course, was what Goldberg had been after all along, and now he added a sweetener. "In short," he said, "we'll put aside the withdrawal clause. And as far as I'm concerned, you can take the credit. Our interests are parallel anyway, so you introduce the resolution."

Fedorenko judged that the time had come for him to begin nibbling at the bait. A meaningless cease-fire resolution without a withdrawal clause suited him fine. Still, he did not want to seem overly anxious.

"A simple cease-fire, eh?" he said suspiciously.

"Don't you think that sounds reasonable?" Goldberg asked.

"Well . . ."

Less than half an hour after they had closed the door of the Quiet Room behind them, Goldberg and Fedorenko emerged, smiling and in apparent good spirits. Side by side, they walked to the escalator and rode up to the delegates' dining room. At 2:41 P.M., the Security Council resumed debate. Goldberg immediately yielded the floor to "the respected representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." Fedorenko then

offered a resolution which, at 3:27 P.M., was passed unanimously. The text:

The Security Council,

Noting the oral report of the Secretary General in this situation,

Having heard the statements made in the council,

Concerned at the outbreak of fighting and with the menacing situation in the Near East,

1. Calls upon the governments concerned as a first step to take forthwith all measures for an immediate cease-fire and for a cessation of military activities in the area.

2. Requests the Secretary General to keep the council promptly and currently informed on the situation.

Wednesday, June Seventh

Efrayim Caspi stood on the edge of a freshly dug trench and peered eastward through his binoculars into the early morning mist. Some hundred yards away, a jackal scooted across the road and disappeared into a cluster of purple bougainvillaea. Nothing else moved. All Caspi could see were the meticulously tended green fields and citrus groves. Never in his thirty-one years at the *kibbutz*, he thought, had Tel Yitzhak looked more serene or beautiful.

“*Ah-haleriya!*” he cursed in Yiddish, putting the binoculars back in their case. “When are they going to get here?”

The men in the trench began to laugh.

“Efrayim,” said a squat man with a vintage Palmach stocking cap perched on his head, “since when are you in such a hurry to see Arabs? You’re perhaps preparing a welcoming committee?”

There was more nervous laughter.

“Maybe the *mamzerim* won’t come after all,” another man said. “Maybe they heard about Feurstein being in the trenches today.”

Joel Feurstein, seventy-three years old, was the *kibbutz* shoemaker and the oldest member of the community.

“Don’t worry,” the shoemaker muttered, nodding his head, “they’ll be here, they’ll be here.”

The laughter broke off abruptly. The Jordanians would, of course, attack. No one really doubted that for a moment. For Tel Yitzhak, the “Hill of Isaac,” stood astride the Jordanian invasion route across the narrow waist of Israel. Thus, unlike many of the Israeli settlements that the Arabs were simply by-

passing, Tel Yitzhak and the cluster of farming villages around it were military targets of strategic importance.

A great ball of sun was beginning to stoke up the morning air and dispel the dawn chill. Caspi slipped out of his blue-zippered cardigan, tied the sleeves around his waist and slung his Lee Enfield .303 over his shoulder, muzzle down. Then slowly he began to walk down the long line of sandbagged trenches. A tall, sandy-haired man in his early fifties, Caspi had been too old to be called up for regular army reserve duty. Instead, in the week before the war, he had been assigned to command Tel Yitzhak's self-defense force: forty-two *kibbutz* boys between the ages of fifteen and seventeen, fifty-three men over the age of forty-nine and a dozen members of a Zionist youth movement from Argentina who had arrived three weeks earlier. Only ten of Tel Yitzhak's younger men had been relieved of duty by the army on the off chance that the Jordanians would attack the Sharon Plain and break through the border flanks. The Jordanians were about to try to do just that.

With Caspi in charge, the defenders had cleaned out Tel Yitzhak's long-unused air raid shelters and prepared their defenses—a series of interconnecting zigzag trenches lined with corrugated metal and anchored by sandbagged machine-gun bunkers. As soon as war broke out and the Jordanians joined in the assault, Caspi had hastily added four mortar positions. Luckily there had been plenty of barbed wire to reinforce the perimeter defenses. But after the first wave of Arab planes hit the coastal area, Caspi stopped worrying about the perimeter. His overriding concern was that Tel Yitzhak had no anti-aircraft guns.

After checking the western mortar position, Caspi turned and headed toward the *kibbutz* cowshed. Inside the low-lying, asbestos-roofed barn, Shaul Guri, Tel Yitzhak's "dairy coordinator," was busily adjusting a bank of electric milking machines.

"*Shalom*," Caspi said.

"*U'vraha*," Guri answered, pushing his khaki *tembel* hat back onto his balding head. "You see, even now they have to be cared for. Such spoiled animals."

Guri switched on the power, and the milking machines hummed gently.

“How does it look to you, Efrayim?” he asked. He picked up a rifle from the top of an aluminum milk can.

“The cows or the situation?” Caspi asked.

“The situation, of course.”

“Frankly, very bad.”

Guri shook his head. “I don’t understand. Can’t Central Command provide reinforcements, regular troops? We’re not much of an army. A bunch of kids, a bunch of *alter kakers* and a handful of South American greenhorns. I mean, they promised yesterday that they’d send in soldiers.”

“And they promised today, too,” Caspi said. He turned on a water hose. “Four platoons were supposed to get here after dawn from Kfar Saba. But everything’s pinned down there now. Maybe they’ll get through yet. I don’t know.”

Caspi bent down, picked up the hose and let the cool water run over his lips.

“Well,” Guri said, rubbing the stubble on his chin, “it’s a good thing you stuck around a little longer, no?”

The remark was barbed. Caspi was the leader of a Tel Yitzhak reform group that had long wanted to abolish the *kibbutz’s* communal child-raising system. Only recently, after a bitter debate, a general membership meeting had voted his proposal down. Ever since, the close-knit community had buzzed with rumors that Caspi and his wife, Leah, were planning to quit and move to the city.

Caspi ignored the remark. “You’d better get back to the trenches, Shaul. I’m going over to the dining hall to check on things.”

Caspi strode through the thin stretch of fir trees alongside the barn and up the cement steps to Tel Yitzhak’s communal dining hall. Out of habit, he rubbed his feet briskly along a built-in metal grating to remove the reddish Sharon sand from his shoes.

Inside, the normally sunny dining room seemed dull and gray. The tall glass windows had been taped and sandbagged. At the far end of the hall a watercolor mural of folk-dancing

farmers, which the *kibbutz* children had prepared for the last Passover *seder*, hung limply from a wall. Crates of ammunition were scattered across the floor. At the long yellow formica tables a squad of twenty *kibbutz* women busily packed first-aid equipment and food supplies into cartons.

Margalit Zadok, the *kibbutz* nurse, ran up to Caspi. "Efrayim, I've been looking for you."

"What's the matter?" Caspi asked.

"Well, I've moved the plasma down into the bunkers. But we don't seem to have enough morphine ampules. I telephoned Even Yehoshua, but the clinic doesn't answer there."

Caspi gazed quietly into the girl's dark face. It was he who had been her teacher when she arrived with a Youth Aliyah group from Yemen fifteen years ago, and ever since, Caspi and his wife had treated her as if she were their own daughter.

"I'm sorry, Margalit. You'll have to make do with what you have. Even if the clinic had more, there's no way to get it over here now. I'm sorry."

Margalit forced a smile. "You'd better send down some bottles of cognac, then. We'll need something for the wounded."

"You'll manage. I know you will," Caspi said. He patted her cheek.

He turned and walked down the center of the dining room into the back kitchen. Leah Caspi, in blue shorts and heavy *kibbutz* work boots, was leaning over a steam table, scooping hot cereal into stainless steel canisters. Efrayim placed his hand gently on her shoulders. She jumped slightly.

"Oh, Efrayim, it's you."

"Frightened?" he asked.

"No," she replied, straightening the triangular kerchief that held her hair back. "Just a little nervous, like everybody else. This is the second batch of *solet* I've made up. I dropped half a can of pepper into the first by mistake."

"How are the kids taking it?" Caspi asked.

"You know—*sabras!* Moshe's Udi told our Tzvika that the Jordanians have Russian tanks, and Tzvika said he shouldn't worry because Dayan was sending in the paratroopers."

Caspi sighed. "I wish he were right."

“And I wish we’d evacuated the kids from here,” Leah said.

“Look, we’ve been all over that,” Caspi said. “There’s no place to send them. You’ve got to understand that. There isn’t any place that’s safe now. The whole country’s in the same boat.”

His voice had risen almost to a shout. “I’m sorry,” he said.

“That’s okay,” Leah said. “Want something to eat?”

Caspi shook his head. “No, I’ll get something later. I’d better go back.”

“Efrayim!”

Shaul Guri burst into the kitchen. “Efrayim, come quickly. They’re here!”

Caspi blanched slightly. “Leah,” he said quietly, “you and the other women get down into the bunkers. Now.”

She stretched out her hand to her husband. But he had already turned and left. The screen door slammed behind him.

With Guri, the dairy coordinator, running at his side, Caspi raced toward the trenches. Guri’s sixteen-year-old son Amnon was standing up, pointing toward the fields. “Look,” he said. “*Look!*”

Caspi turned and peered into the sun. He cupped his hands over his eyes. He could make out some movement at the line of cypress trees at the far edge of the orange groves. He took out his binoculars. It was a column of Jordanian armor—tanks, half-tracks, personnel carriers, jeeps, self-propelled artillery. And behind the column, fanning out on both flanks, was a battalion of infantry.

For the next few minutes, Caspi watched the Jordanians move closer and closer. Suddenly one of the lead Jordanian tanks rolled over a mine, setting off an explosion. The hatch opened, and the four men inside fled. Soon a jeep arrived at the head of the column and some men jumped out, carrying what looked like stand-up vacuum cleaners.

“What are they doing?” one of the young South Americans asked.

“They’re going to clear the mine field,” Caspi said. He tried to remember the newcomer’s name, but it completely escaped him.

“Where are their planes?” the Argentinian asked.

“I don’t know,” Caspi said.

Caspi made his way along the trench line to Tel Yitzhak’s white cement water tower. The tower stood on the highest point of the Hill of Isaac and commanded a view of the entire region.

“Zeevik,” he shouted.

Zeevik Golan, the red-haired, nineteen-year-old radio operator, glanced over the side of the sandbagged bunker atop the tower.

“Have you told Tel Aviv the Jordanians are here?” Caspi asked matter-of-factly.

Zeevik nodded. Caspi ran back toward the trenches.

When he reached the eastern mortar position, Caspi saw that the Jordanian armor was now moving ahead again. Within a few minutes, the tanks were within shelling distance. Through his binoculars, Caspi saw small puffs of smoke exhaled by the barrels of the tanks’ cannon. The shells whistled overhead, then exploded—long by 200 yards. Again Caspi saw the puffs of smoke and the tanks recoil one after another. This time they were short by 100 yards. Then, on the third round, the Jordanians found the mark.

“All right,” Caspi shouted, “start firing the mortars.”

This time Caspi crouched as he ran along the trench line to the tower. Pressing himself close against its round white walls, he scrambled up the metal rung ladder to the top.

“Zeevik,” he said, “do you have the Assault King on the set?” “The Assault King” had been Colonel Uri Ben-Ari’s nickname since his Palmach days.

“Just got his HQ now,” Zeevik said.

“Let me have the mike,” Caspi said.

Caspi looked out through an opening in the sandbags to the furious battle below. He began shouting into the radio:

“Slingshot, this is Nehemiah; Slingshot, this is Nehemiah. Enemy tanks grid coordinates 071428-371496, repeat 071428-371496. Estimate sixteen to twenty Shermans. Also four armored personnel carriers, three command jeeps. No sight of airplanes yet. We have no anti-aircraft here; repeat, we have no anti-aircraft here. Over.”

A female voice from Ben-Ari's headquarters near Ben Shemen came in surprisingly clear. "Nehemiah, this is Slingshot; Nehemiah, this is Slingshot. Read you very well. Think you should know we have our hands full here and doubt if we can spare any reinforcements. Try to hold them as long as you can. Over and out."

Caspi looked at the radio set with undisguised disgust.

"Listen, Zeevik," he said to the radio operator, "log that message and try to raise them again. I can't just stay here. Keep trying. I'll try to get back."

Zeevik watched Caspi climb over the side and then looked down at the settlement. Tel Yitzhak was covered in plumes of acrid smoke that drifted slowly westward to the sea. Near the library, a neat line of white stucco cottages had been shattered by a tank shell. Flames were shooting out from the roof of the dining hall. Margalit Zadek and another woman were half-carrying, half-dragging a wounded man across the *kibbutz* lawn toward the shelters. In the trenches, the men were slumped up against the walls, firing their rifles and machine guns and mortars.

Now the tanks had come still closer, and the Jordanian artillery was hurling salvo after salvo. Zeevik saw Caspi sprint past one of the machine-gun bunkers that had collapsed under a direct hit. Then Zeevik went back to the radio set and picked up the microphone.

"Slingshot," he said, "this is Nehemiah; Slingshot, this is Nehemiah. Enemy tanks now approximately seven hundred fifty yards from perimeter and advancing. Grid coordinates 0714—"

Just then Zeevik heard a thunderous roar overhead. He looked up. Six planes were climbing out of steep dives.

"Slingshot, this is Nehemiah," Zeevik said more insistently. "Six enemy planes directly overhead."

There was a tremendous explosion that shook the entire tower.

"They're bombing us!" Zeevik yelled into the radio. "They're bombing—"

From below, Efrayim Caspi glanced up just as the tower collapsed in a great cascade of water and jagged concrete.

A Jordanian Hunter jet zoomed in low, its guns drilling holes into the sides of the trenches. Caspi threw himself into a trench and grazed his face against the damp sand. Beside him, the young South American whose name he still could not remember lay on his side, blood gushing from a fatal wound in his stomach.

Caspi grabbed the dead boy's machine gun and started firing it hysterically into the sky. Then he realized that his vision was blurred. He wiped his forearm across his eyes. But that did not seem to help. And until he felt the warm tears coursing down his muddy cheeks, Efrayim Caspi could not understand why he had trouble focusing on the planes diving through the sky over Tel Yitzhak.

In the dank subbasement war room of Israel's Central Army Command, three bare light bulbs swung gently back and forth at the end of long black cords. The lights had been swaying like pendulums since the first Arab bombs began rocking Tel Aviv, and the shifting shadows they cast on the cool gray walls added a further dimension of urgency to the small room. It was, even by Israeli standards, sparsely furnished quarters. The walls remained bare except when army cartographers from the adjoining communications center came in and hung up their maps. At one end of the room stood a plain wooden table and four straight-backed chairs. At the other end of the room was a desk covered with a khaki blanket. The man who worked there—Defense Minister Moshe Dayan—was now curled up in a fetal position on an old sofa, taking his first nap in more than thirty-six hours.

At 1430 hours the Army Chief of Staff, Major General Yitzhak Rabin, was called to the radio telephone. On the other end was the commander of the southern front, Brigadier General Yeshayahou Gavish.

"Yes, yes," Rabin said, cupping his hand over the telephone receiver so as not to waken Dayan. "Yes, I understand . . . So be it . . . *Shalom*, and keep in touch."

Rabin, a methodical man who always seemed to brood before he talked, slowly hung up and turned to the other officers around the table.

“News from Gavish,” he said. “Yoffe managed to pull back his division from the Sinai border relatively intact. He’s digging in around the Ramon Crater.” Rabin’s face was like a motionless mask. He thought a moment, then hunched his shoulders in a gesture of resignation. “Gavish isn’t too happy with Yoffe. He was supposed to pull back to Beersheba. Instead he turned up at the crater. Well, at least he saved his division.”

“Good for Yoffe,” said the Chief of Intelligence, Brigadier General Aharon Yariv. “The terrain is with him.”

Once again, the cartographers were called in. They hung an enormous five-foot-square map of the Sinai on the wall. With rags soaked in an ammonia mixture, they erased the now-outdated position lines on the map’s plastic overlay and repositioned Yoffe’s division in blue crayon near the Ramon Crater. Nearly all the red amoeba-shaped marks representing the Arab armies in the Sinai were well inside Israeli territory.

Before the chart could be taken down, a chubby blonde wearing a khaki mini-skirt entered the room and handed the diminutive Yariv (whose nickname was Arelle) a message. Yariv devoured it in one glance. Then, without looking up, he said: “Better bring the Natanya grid. The Jordanians have overrun Tel Yitzhak.”

As the cartographers left for the new map, Rabin looked over Yariv’s shoulder and read the message in his hand. They were joined by the Chief of Operations, Brigadier General Ezer Weizmann. For a moment, all three men seemed mesmerized by the piece of paper. Then Weizmann walked across the room to the sofa and looked down at the sleeping Dayan.

“Moshe,” he said, shaking his shoulder, “Moshe, it’s time to wake up.”

In the best of times, Moshe Dayan was a light sleeper. And now, as Weizmann shook him gently, the Defense Minister sat bolt upright. With both hands, he smoothed back the thinning hair at his temples and began tucking his wrinkled army shirt

snugly into his pants. As the others waited wordlessly, Dayan adjusted the patch over his left eye.

“All right,” he said to no one in particular, “what is it?”

Yariv handed him the message, then briefly explained the situation, illustrating his points on the new map that had been brought in.

“The Jordanians,” Yariv said dispassionately, “must be regrouping by now near Tel Yitzhak. It’s going to take a sizable force to contain them. They’ve got an infantry brigade and a tank battalion on the coastal road, and judging by their speed from Tulkarm, I wouldn’t be at all surprised if one of Riad’s commando units was in the spearhead. I’d estimate sixteen, maybe eighteen hours from here”—and again he pointed to the suspected Jordanian position—“to Tel Aviv. They’ll be on the outskirts of the city by early tomorrow morning.”

“What’s left of Ben-Ari’s brigade?” Dayan asked.

“Not much,” Yariv replied. “Forty to fifty percent effective. Say four hundred vehicles.”

“What does Narkis have left in the air over Jerusalem?” Dayan asked.

Yariv fetched a clipboard from his table, ran a finger down one column and said: “*Kadahat!* If he can put ten planes in the air, he’s lucky.”

“Ten planes! Twenty planes! What’s the difference?” The speaker was Ezer Weizmann, who, before he took over as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, was commander of the Israeli Air Force. A brilliant technician, Weizmann was the acknowledged architect of the modern Israeli air arm, and its destruction in the first hours of the war was for him a personal catastrophe.

“You all talk,” said Weizmann, “like a bunch of old women. How many tanks, how many planes? Don’t you realize that this could decide the war? They’ve sliced us in half. They’ve severed our communications. They’ve got our oil bottled up in the north and our main tank forces engaged in the south. And Arelle blithely informs us that they’re going to be knocking at the gates of Tel Aviv tomorrow morning. My God, don’t you see we’ve got to smash through the Jordanians at all costs?” Weizmann hesitated for a moment, thinking that there must be

more that he should say. But he only murmured, "At all costs."

At this point, the Deputy Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Haim Barlev, joined the conversation.

"If we can just contain them till tomorrow," Barlev said, "perhaps by then the Arabs will have agreed to the cease-fire. The United Nations—"

"All the worse," Weizmann said. "All the worse. You want a cease-fire with the country divided in two? Excuse me, Haim, but you're not using your head. Either way we lose. If we don't get the cease-fire, we'll have to fight on half a dozen fronts at once. And God forbid we get the cease-fire, we're left with a divided country, which means the effective end of the state. I say we've got to strike. Immediately. Pull troops out of the northern front. Eleazar can spare them. Send Gur's paratroopers. Get Yoffe off his ass in the Ramon Crater and bring him north."

Yariv interrupted. "You're talking nonsense." The short intelligence chief came up to Weizmann and, looking up, stared him straight in the face. "Strike them with what—courage? Guts? The old Palmach spirit? Oh, we've got plenty of that. But we don't have planes. We don't have tanks. We don't have reserves. And this isn't 1948. There's nothing the Arabs would like more than for us to disperse our forces. Take a single brigade away from the north and, mark my words, the Syrians will be down on top of Eleazar before you know it. As for Gur, he's already been sent to Jerusalem. And you want to pull Yoffe back." Yariv looked around the room in amazement, as if this suggestion, on the very face of it, was sheer madness. "Yoffe's the only commander in the Sinai who's showing any sense. He's sticking to the defensive. Remember"—and here Yariv tapped his head with a finger—"Yam Suf. If we're going to hold our own—and I still think we can if we don't lose our heads—it's going to be with Yam Suf."

Before Weizmann could reply, Rabin spoke up. "Arelle's right," he said, looking at Yariv. "We simply don't have the capability to break through the Jordanian column without taking troops away from other critical sectors. What's important now is to hold on to what we have."

"I don't believe my ears are hearing right," Weizmann said.

“Israeli officers willing to settle for a cautious line that any draftee would reject as militarily disastrous.” He turned to Rabin and the others. “I warn you, the country’s blood will be on your hands.”

Exerting all the self-control he could muster, Rabin did not reply to Weizmann’s thrust. There had been an undercurrent of personal friction in the war room almost from the moment the battle began. But these frictions in the high command were not what concerned Dayan now. This was no time, Dayan thought, to worry about personal problems. (Unbeknownst to anyone but Weizmann, who was his brother-in-law, Dayan had received a message earlier in the day informing him that his daughter Yaël was missing in action in the Sinai.) He was expected, he knew, to make a decision.

“There’s more than enough blood flowing in this country for all of us,” Dayan began. “We are all mutually responsible. And if anyone is more responsible than the others, it is me. I don’t see that we’ve ever had much choice but to fall back wherever we could to defensive positions and hold the line. In this case, to counterattack the Jordanians at the waist is out of the question. I agree with Arelle—such a step would play right into the Arabs’ hands. As for the fuel—of course, that is a major problem. But if our tanks fall back to prepared positions and dig in, well, then, they won’t need their normal supplies of fuel. What they have now in ready reserve should be enough to continue fighting defensively.”

“But certainly not enough,” Rabin said, “to continue indefinitely.”

“No, not indefinitely,” Dayan agreed.

“Our only hope,” said Barlev, “is outside help. That means aircraft from France and probably troops from the West, especially from the United States.”

“The trouble,” said Yariv, “is that the government, for reasons I personally cannot understand, has been trying to play down our losses overseas. The world must be made to understand that we are on the verge of being overwhelmed. It must be made clear that the situation is desperate. Above all, the

Wednesday, June 7th 83

Jews in America should be told of the full extent of our losses so that they'll put pressure on their government to act."

"Yes," Dayan agreed, "that has to be changed. I'll talk to Eshkol immediately."

NNNNMIT

FLASH ,,,, ,

FLASH ,,,, ,

ISRAEL AIR FORCE DESTROYED ,,,,,,

REUTER BSP

BULLETIN

ZCZC EPE 496

SS AHD

2144: BULLETIN ,,,,,,, ISRAEL AIR FORCE:

TEL AVIV, JUNE 7 (REUTERS)—PREMIER LEVI ESHKOL TODAY ADMITTED THAT ISRAEL'S AIR FORCE HAD BEEN DECIMATED IN THE FIRST HOURS OF THE WAR WITH THE ARABS AND WAS NO LONGER CAPABLE OF DEFENDING THE COUNTRY FROM ATTACK.

(MORE) JA/BSP

NNNN

ZCZC EPE 490

UU AHD

2146: URGENT ,, 1ST ADD TEL AVIV ISRAEL AIR FORCE:

XXX ATTACK.

ESHKOL'S STUNNING DISCLOSURE WAS THE HIGH POINT OF A DRAMATIC NATIONWIDE RADIO ADDRESS FROM JERUSALEM. IN ADDITION, THE ISRAELI PREMIER ADMITTED THAT ARAB COLUMNS HAD PENETRATED ISRAELI TERRITORY AT FOUR POINTS. ESHKOL COUPLED THE REPORT ON THE DETERIORATING MILITARY SITUATION WITH A PLEA TO WESTERN NATIONS TO COME TO THE AID OF ISRAEL.

"THIS IS THE ELEVENTH HOUR," HE SAID. "IT IS TIME FOR OUR FRIENDS TO LIVE UP TO THEIR PROMISES."

(MORE) JA/MJL

NNNN

ZCZC EPE 497

UU AHD

2149, 2ND ADD TEL AVIV ISRAEL AIR FORCE:

XXXX PROMISES.

EGYPTIAN UNITS, ACCORDING TO ESHKOL, CUT OFF THE SOUTHERNMOST PORT CITY OF EILAT, OVERRAN SCORES OF SETTLEMENTS AROUND THE GAZA STRIP AND STARTED UP THE COAST TOWARD TEL AVIV. JORDANIAN UNITS, STIFFENED BY EGYPTIAN COMMANDOS, CUT THE MAIN ROAD BETWEEN TEL AVIV AND JERUSALEM. ANOTHER JORDANIAN COLUMN WAS ON THE VERGE OF SEVERING ISRAEL IN HALF AT ITS NARROW, VULNERABLE WAIST, JUST NORTH OF TEL AVIV.

(MORE) JA/MJL

NNNN

ZCZC EPE 498

UU AHD

2150: 3RD ADD TEL AVIV ISRAEL AIR FORCE:

XXX TEL AVIV.

MOST OF ISRAEL'S ELITE AIR FORCE, ESHKOL SAID, WAS DESTROYED ON THE GROUND DURING THE FIRST HOURS OF THE WAR BY A COORDINATED SURPRISE ATTACK INVOLVING 700 ARAB PLANES. THE SUBSEQUENT DEFEATS ON THE GROUND WERE A DIRECT RESULT OF ARAB SUPREMACY IN THE AIR. ISRAEL'S TANKERS AND TROOPS, THE PREMIER SAID, HIS VOICE HUSKY WITH EMOTION, HAD FOUGHT DESPERATELY TO STEM THE ARAB ADVANCES. BUT THEY HAD BEEN SEVERELY MAULED BY REPEATED ATTACKS FROM WAVES OF ARAB PLANES. ESHKOL ALSO CHARGED THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD USED POISON GAS IN THE NEGEV WHEN AIR ATTACKS FAILED TO DISLodge ISRAELI DEFENDERS.

(MORE) JA/MJL

NNN ZCZC EPE 498

UU AHD

2150: 4TH ADD TEL AVIV ISRAEL AIR FORCE:

XXX DEFENDERS.

ESHKOL SAID HE WAS SURE THAT FOR THE MOMENT THE ISRAELI DEFENSE FORCE WOULD BE ABLE TO CONTAIN THE ARAB ADVANCES DESPITE HEAVY LOSSES. BUT THE URGENCY OF THE MILITARY SITUATION WAS BORNE OUT BY THE FACT THAT ISRAELI CENSORS PERMITTED FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS TO FILE VIRTUALLY UNCENSORED ACCOUNTS OF THE FIGHTING HERE AS SOON AS THE PREMIER'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION WAS FINISHED. BEFORE THAT, DETAILS OF BOTH THE EXTENT OF THE ARAB ONSLAUGHT AND ISRAELI LOSSES HAD BEEN DELETED FROM PRESS DISPATCHES BY THE COUNTRY'S STRICT CENSORS. WESTERN DIPLOMATS WHO HEARD THE SPEECH SAID THAT TWO THINGS WERE APPARENT. FIRST, THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY, THE STATE WAS APPARENTLY IN DANGER OF EXTINCTION. AND SECOND, THAT THE PREMIER OBVIOUSLY HOPED THAT PUBLICATION OF THE PLIGHT MIGHT FORCE WESTERN CAPITALS INTO TAKING DIPLOMATIC—AND EVEN MILITARY—MEASURES ON ISRAEL'S BEHALF.

(MORE) JA/MJL

Acting on urgently cabled instructions from Jerusalem, Israeli diplomats wasted no time in following up Eshkol's emotional plea with specific requests for help from the governments of Europe. From Bucharest to Bonn to London, wherever they asked for diplomatic and material support, the Israeli envoys were given a sympathetic hearing. But as always, the chancelleries of Europe were swayed less by the rights and wrongs of a case than by pragmatic political considerations. The diplomatic scorecard:

Rumania—For Rumania's Communist leaders, the war in the Mideast was yet another opportunity to demonstrate their independence from Moscow. Accordingly, Communist party boss Nicolai Ceausescu, whom a diplomat once aptly described as possessing "the charm of a block of wood," summoned the Israeli Envoy Extraordinary, Zvi Ayalon, to his office and announced that he was prepared to sign a three-year treaty of trade and friendship with Jerusalem. Understanding that this was Ceaușescu's way of thumbing his nose at the Russians without

offering anything concrete, Ayalon blandly asked: "And when do you propose to make the first shipment of Sibiu salami—before or after the fall of Tel Aviv?"

Italy—Normally Amintore Fanfani, Italy's indefatigable Foreign Minister, went about his business like a veritable dynamo. Since June 5, however, the five-foot three-inch Fanfani (whose nickname, "Il Motorino" or "The Little Motor," attested to his reputation) had been the picture of inaction. Routine matters piled up on his desk. His secretary couldn't pry a signature out of him. A deeply moral man, Fanfani was torn apart by the war in the Middle East. The Israeli appeal for help only made matters worse. "What," he asked Israeli Ambassador Ehud Avriel and Minister Simha Dinitz, "can Italy do if the United States stands by?" Fanfani also had to worry about the Russians, who had been dropping broad hints that the whole matter was none of Italy's business. On top of all this, there was Italy's powerful Communist party to take into consideration. Divided between a rank-and-file sympathy for Israel and a doctrinaire support for the Arabs, the Communists warned the government that the only course of action open to it was not to take any action at all. In the end, this was exactly what Fanfani did.

Finland—For Urho Kekkonen, the tough, shrewd President of Finland, there was never any question about how he should respond to the Israeli requests. Finland's independence depended on one thing: maintaining a careful balance between its giant neighbor to the east, the Soviet Union, and the countries of the West. The Russians, moreover, quietly let it be known in Helsinki that any overt demonstration of pro-Israel sentiment would be regarded by Moscow as a breach of faith and, more important, as tantamount to an anti-Soviet act. To his credit, when he met with Israeli Ambassador Moshe Avidan, Kekkonen did not try to soften his "no" with diplomatic double-talk. "We have no freedom of action in this area," he said bluntly. "I deeply regret that your country finds itself in this position, but you will understand that I must think of Finland first."

Denmark—During World War II, no country had tried harder to save its Jews from Nazi persecution than Denmark. Since the creation of the State of Israel, moreover, relations between Copenhagen and Jerusalem had been especially warm. But in 1967, the government of Jens Otto Krag depended for its survival on a working arrangement with the Marxist-oriented Socialist Peoples' Party. And when it came to dealing with the situation in the Middle East, Krag—a brilliant, opportunistic politician—was torn between his own inclinations and a desire not to alienate the Marxists, whose sympathies on the issue were divided. As a result, Krag was deeply ambivalent. For the record, he called for an end to the fighting and the “implementation, through the good offices of the United Nations, of a just and lasting peace in the area.” Yet, though he privately assured Israeli Ambassador Esther Herlitz that the Danes, to a man, were on Israel's side, he claimed that there was nothing his government could do independently on such short notice.

The Netherlands—Foreign Minister Joseph Marie Antoine Hubert Luns, a tall (six foot, four inches), mustachioed man with a sardonic smile, didn't wait for the Israelis to come to him. Even before Eshkol's plea, Luns personally called upon the Israeli ambassador, David Shaltiel, and told him that the Netherlands (the only country to give unstinting support to President Johnson's prewar plan for an international armada to clear the Straits of Tiran) would do whatever it could to help Israel. Diplomatically, Luns said, he had instructed Dutch representatives in the United Nations, the Soviet Union and the Middle East to press for an immediate cease-fire. In addition, he had already ordered four surgical teams to fly to Tel Aviv. (The teams, along with two planeloads of medical equipment, were grounded in Cyprus when it became apparent that Israeli airfields were no longer operational.) Luns also offered to lend the Israelis 10 French-made Mirage fighter planes. It only remained for Israeli pilots to pick them up and figure out a way to get them back to Israel. Within twenty-four hours, the Israeli ambassador rounded up ten Jewish airline pilots of various nationalities and outfitted them with papers identifying them as Israeli

citizens. The planes, with their Dutch markings removed, refueled at U.S. Air Force bases—Ariano in Italy and Adana in eastern Turkey—then headed for Tel Aviv. They were never heard from again. The Dutch presumed that the jets, low on fuel, fell prey to a flight of Egyptian jets patrolling off the coast.

West Germany—Few countries agonized over the Israeli appeal longer or harder than West Germany. Kurt Georg Kiesinger, the silver-haired Chancellor, carefully examined the matter with Willy Brandt, his articulate Foreign Minister and coalition partner. Brandt argued passionately that the Germans, more than anyone else, had an obligation to the Jews that could only be redeemed by unstinting aid delivered as soon as possible. Kiesinger, a pragmatic Swabian, contended that emotions aside, there was little that West Germany could do by itself. “If Israel is to be saved,” Kiesinger said, “it will take the resources of the Americans. And from what I hear, even these resources would be hard put to stave off the Arabs.” Brandt then urged that at the very least, the Germans should make a gesture. Kiesinger responded by saying that a gesture alone obviously would not help the Israelis, but it could very well hurt Bonn’s already shaky relations with the Arab world and ultimately slow down West Germany’s drive to isolate the East Germans and establish solid ties with the Communist countries of East Europe. Finally, in desperation, Brandt hinted that the Grand Coalition would come apart unless Kiesinger agreed to do something. In the end, the West Germans dispatched 75,000 additional gas masks to Israel (the planes carrying the masks were grounded, along with the Dutch doctors, in Cyprus) and publicly agreed to supply Israel with \$225 million in long-term credits to help repair the country’s war-damaged economy.

Great Britain—Along with David Ben-Gurion and Abba Eban, Golda Meir had been spirited out of Israel on a lumbering Norge transport. Once in London, Mrs. Meir did not mince words with Prime Minister Harold Wilson and Foreign Secretary George Brown when they greeted her at 10 Downing Street. In homey, simple language, she reminded them of the

Nazi holocaust and of Britain's "shameful role" in refusing to allow Jews to immigrate to Palestine before and after World War II. She did not let Brown forget that only a few weeks earlier, at an international Socialist meeting in Rome, he had personally given her his word that Britain would support Israel if it came to a showdown with the Arabs. Now Brown, a bit maudlin from too much drink, tried to defend himself.

"God knows, Golda, I'm behind you," he told her, as tears welled up in his eyes. "If you only understood the pressure I'm under from Sophie." As Golda Meir knew, Brown's wife, Sophie, was Jewish. The next day, however, Brown told the House of Commons: "British concern is not to take sides. Instructions are being given to all our forces in the area to avoid any involvement in the conflict."

France—The meeting between Ben-Gurion and De Gaulle had been arranged by Baron Guy de Rothschild, a close friend of Premier Georges Pompidou. De Gaulle's only stipulation: that the meeting be kept secret until he decided to release a communiqué on the conversation. Thus, shortly after he arrived in Paris, Ben-Gurion, accompanied by the suave Israeli Ambassador to Paris, Walter Eytan, was ushered into De Gaulle's sunlit office on the third floor of the Elysée Palace. Ben-Gurion, who had a long-standing admiration for De Gaulle, put his case bluntly. Israel, he said, was in danger of extinction. France's help was needed—now. De Gaulle fidgeted uneasily. Then, as Ben-Gurion finished speaking and settled back in an uncomfortable Empire chair, the general arranged his thoughts.

"You know, my dear Ben-Gurion," he began, "I treasure the warm memory of our personal relations in the last ten years. You know, too, how the vast subject of the renaissance and destiny of the State of Israel attracts and moves me. All the more so since the conflict that has started again in the Middle East has important consequences that clearly concern France for all the political, economic, moral, religious and historic reasons that you are aware of. All that having been said, it remains for you to know our thought at this juncture of history. For many months I have been urging Israel to exert strict moderation in

her relations with her neighbors and in her territorial ambitions. If, as is now apparent, you are embroiled in a life-and-death struggle, it is in no small measure due to the failure of your government to heed our warning. I understand that in the present context these are harsh words. Nevertheless, history has a way of rendering harsh judgments on those who ignore her warnings. France's role, my dear Ben-Gurion, is clear. It is France's destiny to station herself at the fulcrum of the shifting scale of world power, careful to correct imbalances—political, psychological, physical—as they occur. To leave the fulcrum to participate in a war would be to increase the chances of an East-West confrontation. It would mean the loss of what moderating influence we can bring to bear on the Arab nations. There have been provocations on both sides. Were France now to judge the issue out of hand by aiding Israel, France would relinquish her special and unique role that we have seized for her; France would be untrue to her destiny.”

The lunch, Dmitri Stepanovich Polyansky thought as he strolled away from the Hotel Metropole in downtown Moscow, was bad enough, but the conversation was unbearable. Polyansky, a deputy premier and the Politburo's expert on agriculture, had just played host to a group of East German agronomists; over hors d'oeuvres (eggs à la Russe covered with day-old mayonnaise) they discussed the best way to slaughter cattle, and during the main course (overcooked chicken Kiev) they debated the relative merits of chemical fertilizer versus human excrement. For the better part of a block, Polyansky seriously tried to decide which had bothered him more—the arguments or the thick German accents.

Polyansky glanced at his watch. It was 2:15. A full-dress Politburo session had been called for 2:30. Suddenly he wished he had taken his limousine. Comrade Brezhnev, he reflected, had a way of making latecomers feel as if they were back in nursery school. Polyansky quickened his pace and mused about the role he should play at the meeting. The Politburo, Russia's highest decision-making body, was obviously going to discuss the

situation in the Middle East. Polyansky wondered how much influence Brezhnev's wife, Raisa—a Jew—would have on her husband. Even if his wife did not try to influence him, Brezhnev would probably follow his normally cautious line. Polyansky's view coincided with Brezhnev's; after all, he, Polyansky, had been to the United States, and he felt certain that the Americans would intervene if the Arabs were allowed to go too far. On the other hand, Polyansky reasoned, it might not be a good idea to appear *overly* cautious, since the Arab adventure could turn into a resounding success for the Soviet Union. No, he thought, the best course would be to sound slightly tougher than Brezhnev—but not as tough as Shelepin and his group of hawks.

A uniformed guard just inside the Kremlin wall recognized Polyansky and saluted smartly. Polyansky nodded back, then glanced at the clock in the Kremlin tower: 2:26. He hurried past the giant Czar Cannon, which had never been fired, and the huge Czar Bell, which had never been rung, to the front entrance of a long building. Inside the door, he paused in front of a mirror to brush dandruff off the shoulders of his Italian-cut suit (unlike most of his colleagues, Polyansky was a sharp dresser); then he hurried up the curving marble staircase to the second floor. He walked past a half dozen guards, down a long corridor carpeted with an oriental rug, and ducked through an unmarked door into a small antechamber, then through yet another door at the far end into the Politburo's conference chamber.

Most of the room was taken up by a long green baize-covered table. On top of it were bottles of mineral water and lemonade standing on small silver trays. A picture of Lenin stared down from the far wall. The blinds on the windows were half drawn. Sitting around the table were the nine other full members of the Politburo, a few alternate members, such as Yuri Andropov, the head of the KGB (Komitet Gosudarstvenoi Besopastnasti or Committee for State Security), and Defense Minister Andrei Grechko, resplendent in his bemedaled marshal's uniform. As Polyansky slid into his seat, Leonid Brezh-

nev, directly under the picture of Lenin, looked up and frowned. "Perhaps now," he said, "we can get down to the business at hand." Polyansky glanced at his watch: it read 2:31.

Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, the sixty-year-old First Secretary of the Soviet Communist party, leaned back in his chair. "Comrades," Brezhnev said quietly, "I assume no one will object if we dispense with the agenda. I have a feeling that the state farms in Kazakhstan will survive even if we don't get to them today." Everyone around the table chuckled—except Gennadi Voronov, the thin-lipped, bespectacled specialist on sheep breeding who had brought the matter up in the first place.

Brezhnev crammed another Novost cigarette into his holder and lit it. "Somehow," he went on—as usual trying to drain another laugh out of the same joke—"one feels that the fighting in the Middle East should take precedence over the state farms of Kazakhstan." A second chuckle, slightly more dutiful than the first, went around the table.

Brezhnev continued: "I've asked Comrade Andropov here to fill us in on the latest reports from the area. So, Comrade." Brezhnev nodded to Andropov.

As a matter of professional survival, members of the Politburo are experts on Kremlin politics. All of them immediately grasped the significance of the fact that it was Andropov and not Grechko who was asked to deliver the report; that meant KGB communications with Cairo (Andropov to Egyptian intelligence chief Salah Nasr) had taken precedence over the military channel (Grechko to Egyptian Field Marshal Abdel Hakim Amer). And this, in turn, signified that the advice the Egyptians were getting would be a good deal more militant than usual.

Andropov, his face expressionless, opened a worn imitation leather valise and took out a manila folder marked "Presidium Only." (Though the name of the ruling body had been officially changed from Presidium to Politburo—its original title—months earlier, new stamps had not yet been manufactured. Thus top-secret documents were still stamped "Presidium Only.") Without taking his eyes off the pages in front of him, Andropov began his report.

“According to our contacts throughout the area, it is confirmed that the combined Arab air forces caught the Israeli Air Force on the ground early Monday morning,” he recited crisply. “It is no exaggeration to say that as of today the Israeli Air Force has almost ceased to exist. The complete Arab ascendancy in the air gave a new complexion to the ground war, which began in earnest Tuesday morning. Egyptian columns quickly overran some paramilitary border settlements around Gaza and cut off the Israeli port of Eilat. Jordanian columns, bolstered by the addition of a number of Egyptian commando units, cut the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road and struck out for the Mediterranean north of Tel Aviv. It is still uncertain whether the drive to sever Israel in half will meet with success.* In the north, the Syrians claim they have overrun border settlements in the northern part of the area called Galilee, but intercepts of Israeli field reports in the area indicate that reports of these Syrian successes may be inaccurate.”

“What about the other Arab claims, Comrade?” asked Nikolai Podgorny, the sixty-four-year-old, white-haired chief of state. “The Arabs have a way with words—they have exaggerated before.”

“What I am relaying to you,” Andropov answered, “is not what the Egyptian command passed on to us; their reports were indeed often exaggerated. The information I have the honor of relaying to you reflects data collected by our own operatives.”

“Your estimates, Comrade Andropov,” Brezhnev interrupted, “would seem to coincide with what the Americans must be hearing in Washington. How else can we account for the feeling of crisis that is reflected in the United States press? And how else can we account for President Johnson’s use of the Hot Line?” Brezhnev ran his hand through his bushy hair. “No, Comrades, I think we can assume that whatever the details, the Arabs are doing quite well for once with the materials we gave them. But their success poses serious problems—and risks—for us. Let me itemize them. To begin with, should we assume that the United States will intervene if the Arabs threaten the existence of their satellite State of Israel? Next, should we attempt

* It, of course, had.

to stop Nasser now so as not to give the United States an excuse to intervene? If we try and fail to stop Nasser, or if we decide not to try, should we attempt to make the Americans stand off? And finally, if the United States does intervene, what response should we make?"

Brezhnev paused for effect. "Naturally," he added dryly, "it would be convenient if we could come to our conclusions before dinnertime tonight." Brezhnev waited a moment for the laughter. When it did not come, he went on. "Mikhail Andreevich," he said, "would you care to start?"

Mikhail Andreevich Suslov, sixty-four, the leading Marxist theoretician on the Politburo, pushed his chair back and stood up. His tousled hair, his delicate features (Suslov suffered from a long-standing kidney ailment), his deliberate enunciation all gave him the air of a preoccupied professor. "Respected Comrades on the Politburo," he began, reading from a position paper prepared by one of his top aides, Konstantin Russakov.

Another lecture, Polyansky thought, fighting back a yawn.

"I will try to keep my remarks brief. From whatever direction you approach the problem, it is clearly a matter of supreme urgency that we stop Nasser now before he overruns the State of Israel. The reasons for this seem to me overpowering. There is no doubt in my mind that if Nasser is completely successful, then our influence in the Middle East—or more precisely, our influence over Nasser—will diminish, not increase. Our predecessors understood this principle well; it was no accident that Comrade Stalin tried to discourage Chairman Mao from waging civil war after the end of the Great Patriotic War [World War II]. Stalin correctly calculated that Mao would win that war and, having won it, would grow less dependent on us. The lesson applies here, too. As long as Nasser faces an armed and resisting Israel, he will need us. The moment he no longer needs us, our influence will cease. Why then should we contribute to his total victory?"

Suslov took a sip of mineral water and ran his thumb behind the wide lapel of his double-breasted suit. "I would further

argue that it is in our interests to keep the Middle East area polarized. As long as Israel exists, the United States will support it. As long as the United States supports Israel, the Arabs—who control something like sixty percent of the oil used in the West—will treat Western imperialism as their archenemy. As long as the Middle East is polarized, it will be in a state of turmoil. This situation will sap Western arms and, no less important, Western attention. If polarization should end—that is, if Israel should cease to exist—there will be nothing to stand in the way of a *rapprochement* between the imperialists in Washington and the Arabs.

“To these preliminary arguments,” Suslov went on, shifting his weight from one foot to the other, “I would add this thought: the Arabs are pseudo-Socialists. The real Socialists in their midst are rotting in jails. Comrade Nasser’s commitment to Socialism [Suslov could barely keep the mockery out of his voice] is the result of a pragmatic estimate that he needs us to help fight what is largely an emotional battle for him. We are being exploited, Comrades. When the Arabs are finished with us, they will discard us.”

Suslov hesitated, then plunged on. “There is one other consideration. The Soviet Union played a role in the creation of the State of Israel. Though we have since come to regret that, can we stand by and watch while pseudo-Socialists finish the job that Hitler started? My view is that a policy that encourages the Arabs to destroy Israel will hurt our cause much more than the Hungarian counterrevolution ever did. Thank you, Comrade Chairman.”

There was a long pause as Suslov sat down and began absently to rearrange his notes. Finally, Alexander Nikolayevich Shelepin broke the silence. “Shades of Kaganovich’s ghost!” he muttered. Shelepin’s reference, intended as a below-the-belt attack on Suslov, was to Lazar Kaganovich, the last Jewish member of the Politburo, who was dismissed from office in 1956.

Coming from Shelepin, the remark surprised no one. For Shelepin, forty-nine, a former KGB chief, was the leader of a faction of Kremlin hard-liners known as the Komsomol group

—so called because most of the members of the group rose to prominence through the ranks of the Young Communist League, or Komsomol. Shelepin himself, a tough, doctrinaire bureaucrat, had suffered a sharp setback in the fall of 1965, when the Party-State Control Committee, which he headed, was summarily dissolved. Since then, Shelepin had been struggling to regain his influence in the Politburo. He had scored some successes: it was largely at his insistence, for example, that writers Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel were put on trial. The current crisis, Shelepin thought, provided him with a golden opportunity. For once, it looked as if militancy would pay off. And that could only work for Shelepin—and against the Kosygin-Brezhnev duumvirate.

“I repeat,” Shelepin said, “Comrade Suslov must have been briefed by Kaganovich himself when—”

Suslov, who seldom spoke at a formal meeting while sitting down, jumped to his feet. Brezhnev waved him down. Then turning to Shelepin, Brezhnev said, “I don’t recall any room in the dialectic for innuendo. Naturally we all value your opinion, Alexander Nikolayevich, if you would pause long enough to give it to us.”

Shelepin shuffled through his notes. “I will make my arguments simply and quickly, Comrades,” he said. “We are, of course, in no position to stop Nasser even if we wanted to. We encouraged him to move into the Sinai to forestall a Jewish attack on Syria. Originally this was supposed to be a limited action. We lost control of the situation as soon as Nasser smelled victory. What makes you think we can regain control of the situation now that he has victory within his grasp?”

“You ask, will the Americans intervene? There is always a risk that they will try. But I will make the case that they are unable to intervene. American forces are stretched too thin for them to mount a major rescue operation in the Middle East. I refer you to Comrade Andropov’s report Number 1064 slant 17. You will note there that the Americans have about forty-five ships in the Mediterranean—but only one hundred fifty to two hundred planes and less than two thousand Marines. What, I

ask you, can they do with two thousand Marines? This is not Lebanon in 1958. Can you imagine the impact on Mr. Johnson when Mr. McNamara offers him, in one hand, a report on the Arab successes in the Palestine area and, in the other hand, a list of what forces they could throw into battle? He will have no choice but to procrastinate.

“Comrades,” Shelepin continued, gathering steam as he went along, “it is about time that we had a clear-cut success. For too long the Americans have been using the *détente* to shift the balance of power in the world against the Socialist forces and the Soviet Union. They talk of *détente*—and take over in Indonesia. They talk of *détente*—and wage war against Vietnam. The massive American commitment in Southeast Asia, the incessant bombing of Vietnam, are all attempts to establish themselves in Asia and create a base from which they can eventually isolate the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The entire history of the State of Israel must be seen in this light, that is, as an attempt to shift the balance of power and isolate the Soviet Union.”

“And how will an Arab victory counter that, Comrade Shelepin?” asked Premier Alexei Kosygin from the far end of the table.

“In victory, the Arabs will be more beholden to us than before. They will need replacements for the war matériel expended during the battles. They will need economic aid. They will need diplomatic support to keep what they have won. They will need someone to lean on. More important, the world will see their victory as a projection of Soviet power into the Middle East. This will have an enormous effect on our friends in Peking, as well as those, both at home and abroad, who doubt that we are capable of projecting this power.”

“We have projected our power to Cuba—and it costs us a million rubles a day for the privilege,” President Podgorny said dryly. The moderates were beginning to snap at Shelepin’s heels.

“Power and influence do not come without charge,” Shelepin replied. “Cuba is a bargain. We get out in influence much more

than we put in, in rubles. Or aren't we interested in influence anymore?"

Suslov rose. "How can we be sure this won't turn into a confrontation between us and the United States? If that happens and we back down, whatever we gain in the Middle East will be lost in another demonstration of our essential weakness."

Shelepin seemed to enjoy the debate. Obviously if they were arguing, they were tempted. "There are some steps we can take to encourage the Americans to take the path of least resistance—that is, to do nothing," he said. "We must increase the ante now, before they get involved. Then, if they are sitting on the fence, they will think twice and three times and four times about rescuing the Jews, since they will think they must then deal with us. After all, look at it from their vantage point; they will say, 'Those Russians have an enormous investment in the Middle East—two billion rubles in the past twelve years. Obviously they can't afford to let us intervene without doing something themselves. And that will lead to a confrontation, which we must avoid at all costs.' "

"Specifically, Comrade Shelepin, what do you propose we do?" Kosygin asked.

"I propose we set about convincing the Americans to keep their hands off. This shouldn't be too hard. Put Agayants [Major General Ivan I. Agayants, chief of the KGB's Department of Disinformation] to work. Let us drop a word here, a word there, that we are prepared to act if they go in. Tell the Yugoslavs at a cocktail party, and they will be certain to pass it on to the Americans. [At this even Suslov couldn't contain a smile; in 1949, he had been one of the first to attack Tito as a deviationist, and he had never changed his mind.] We can heat up the situation in Germany a bit, cut off some convoys going to Berlin, or that sort of thing. And we can put our nuclear forces on a third-degree alert. The Americans, of course, will know about it the minute it happens."

At this suggestion, Suslov practically bounced out of his chair. "That would be asking for an accident," he said.

"Obviously, Mikhail Andreevich, you are not taking into consideration some of the latest advances," Shelepin said patroniz-

ingly. “Thanks to the Americans, we can go on alert status now.*

“Comrades,” Shelepin summed up, “if we remain firm, the Americans will not act to save Israel. This is our moment to turn the tide, to affect the course of history. There is a risk, but I am convinced that it is small compared to what can be accomplished.”

From the corner of the table, Alexei Kosygin quietly began speaking. Though he appeared to be the Caspar Milquetoast of the Presidium, Kosygin had a great advantage over his colleagues. For since coming to power he had made it quite clear that his ambitions were limited and that he was satisfied with his status as a copilot. Thus, when he spoke, Kosygin was listened to with respect, since his was the closest thing the Politburo could muster to an objective voice.

“All this talk of turning the tide is fine,” Kosygin said. “But there are some hard questions to answer. If the Americans cannot risk a confrontation, neither can we. For in any confrontation, we must inevitably back down first—and come out the loser. Therefore, before we become embroiled in a confrontation, we must answer some questions. And the answers should be surrounded by facts, not elaborate phrases. Comrade Shelepin, are you prepared to go on record in *Pravda* that the Americans won’t intervene? Is Nasser your idea of a cause worth fighting for? If the Americans are not put off by our bluff—for that is what you are really suggesting, that we bluff them—if, as I say, they are not put off, how would our generals counter a U.S. airlift to the Middle East? Can we airlift Russian troops to the area as quickly as the Americans? With what? You know as well as I do that we don’t have the airlift capability the Amer-

* Shelepin was referring to the fact that until a year before, the Soviet missile force had never gone on full alert because of the risk of starting a nuclear war by accident. At that time, Soviet missiles were terribly accident-prone. Ironically, the United States—which had solved this problem for its own nuclear forces through a complicated system of interlocking safety devices—decided that the danger of the Soviets’ starting a nuclear war by accident was so great that it would be wiser to give the Russians the secret of making their forces accident-proof. Though this had the advantage of diminishing the risk of accidental war, it allowed the Russians to order up an alert whenever they wanted to convince the Americans they meant business.

icans have. Even if we get the troops there, can we supply them? With what—our fleet of trawlers? Or underwater by submarine? Or by our single helicopter carrier—which happens to be in the North Sea now?”

Kosygin's questions seemed, for the moment at least, to dampen Shelepin's enthusiasm for verbal combat. Kosygin let the questions sink in, then continued somberly. “For my part, Comrades, I am only anxious that we don't make the same mistake that our immediate predecessor made over Cuba. Adventurism only makes it more difficult for us to concentrate on our main task, which is constructing and perfecting Socialism in this country.”

Brezhnev nodded in agreement. “Alexei Nikolayevich has put his finger on it,” he said. “Adventurism must be avoided at all costs. On the other hand, I don't see how we can possibly get Nasser to stop at this point. To try to stop him, moreover, would only give our erstwhile Comrades in Peking another opportunity to accuse us of working against revolution with the American imperialists. No, we must not give them the chance to argue that line. As for the Americans, I think it should be clear that if they decide to intervene, there is nothing much we can do about it. And I'm not at all sure that American intervention won't work to our advantage in other parts of the world, specifically Vietnam. Surely a new commitment in the Middle East will have a profound effect on the old commitment in Asia.”

Brezhnev looked out of the window for a moment. “Comrades,” he went on, “if nobody objects”—here Brezhnev paused for a moment and stared hard at Shelepin—“I suggest that it would be precipitous to do anything drastic just yet. But let's start testing the atmosphere. To begin with, let's seal off the access routes to Berlin and see what kind of reaction we get. And let's shift some more submarines into the Mediterranean.” He paused. “Events are moving at a tremendous rate. We will meet again tomorrow morning at ten and see what the situation looks like then.”

On the spur of the moment, Polyansky decided to try a joke.

“Comrade Brezhnev,” he called, “will we draw overtime pay for all these sessions?”

Brezhnev chuckled. “If it is any consolation, Dmitri Stepanovich, I can assure you that the Americans are working three times as hard as we are.”

From the big French windows of the Oval Office, Dean Rusk watched the evening shadows fall across the White House rose garden. There was something about the scene that made him feel faintly uneasy. For a moment he couldn't put his finger on it. Then he realized what it was; the scene reminded him of the summer evenings when, as a boy, his mother used to take him into town and they would stroll slowly past the well-kept, fenced-off gardens of the rich. The Secretary of State rarely permitted himself to think back to those unhappy days when he was inevitably on the wrong side of the fence. He puffed nervously on his cigarette. Such reminiscing, he thought, was a sure sign of fatigue.

And it had been a difficult day. In the morning, Rusk had attended a grueling meeting of the National Security Council. That dragged on indecisively until lunch. Then, at 2:30 P.M., he had briefed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the crisis. Just as he had anticipated, Bill Fulbright and Frank Church had been downright unpleasant. More surprisingly, even Stu Symington had appeared oddly indecisive. “If it is important to defend the Vietnamese,” Symington had said, “it's equally important to defend Israel. But we have done enough unilateral intervening, and I don't think we should go in unilaterally.” While Rusk was fencing with the Senators, Robert J. McCloskey, the chief State Department spokesman, muffed his lines during a televised press conference. Explaining the Administration's position on the Mideast war, McCloskey declared, “The United States is neutral in thought, word and deed.” Rusk, normally a self-controlled man, exploded in anger when he learned of McCloskey's remark. “Nobody,” he told McCloskey, “has the right to forfeit the ball game for the President of the United States the way you did.” Sheepishly McClos-

key called another press conference and told the assembled reporters: "I just don't want any of you fellows to go off half-cocked. As far as the United States is concerned, we're still in the ball game." Meanwhile Rusk called the President and tried to apologize for McCloskey's blunder. Lyndon Johnson did not seem to be listening. "It's time," said the President, "that we stopped pussyfooting around and came up with some answers to this problem."

Now it was nearly seven o'clock and Rusk, together with McNamara and Rostow, was waiting in the Oval Office for the President to arrive. McNamara, for one, had made up his mind. Sitting cross-legged on a linen-upholstered sofa, the Secretary of Defense was the picture of composure; his thin, fine hair was slicked back from his forehead, his suit was still perfectly pressed, his shoes were glossily shined. But though he appeared perfectly self-assured, McNamara had, in fact, been wrestling with his conscience all day. He was wholeheartedly, even passionately on the side of Israel, but after carefully calculating the options open to the President, he felt duty bound to advise against intervention by the United States. It was by far the most difficult decision he had made during his six years and five months in office.

The President arrived at 7:04. McNamara and Rostow stood up, and Rusk unconsciously took his hands from his pants pockets. From the lines etched deeply on his face, it was clear that this had been a strenuous day for Lyndon Johnson as well. He was still weak from his bout with an upper respiratory infection, and though Doctor Burkley had managed to bring his temperature down to normal, the President was on a steady diet of antibiotics. To make matters worse, all his determined efforts to concoct a consensus on Capitol Hill in favor of a clear-cut U.S. stand on the crisis had been to no avail; Mike Mansfield, the Senate Majority Leader, flatly told him that Congress's mood was uncertain. Even many of those who favored intervention were wary of committing U.S. forces unilaterally. Yet the pressure to do something was obviously mounting. Tomorrow, George Christian informed him, more than 100,000 American Jews were expected to participate in a march on Washington in

a massive show of support for Israel. Clearly the Administration could not afford to delay its decision much longer.

With a quick glance at the grandfather clock standing next to one of the French windows, Johnson strode across the embossed carpet to his desk and picked up a black leather binder.

“Well, I guess it’s all in here,” he said, tapping the binder with the back of his hand. “I assume you’ve all read the latest situation reports, the memo from the Joint Chiefs and Walt’s agenda.”

Each of the three men was holding identical black leather binders.

“Those Israelis are really getting their heads handed to them,” the President said, almost as if he could not believe the reports he had in his hand. “Okay, we’ve got to start somewhere. Walt, it might as well be you.”

“Mr. President,” Rostow began, “I think I’ve contributed as much as I can already. I think it would be best for me to disqualify myself from this discussion, at least from an active part. If it’s all the same to you, I’d like to act as a sort of friend of the court.”

“Damn it, it’s not all the same to me,” the President fired back. “What the hell’s got into you, Walt? I’m not asking you to play President. Just give it to me as you see it.”

Rostow ran his fingers across his forehead, then nervously pinched the skin at his temples. Almost inaudibly, he replied: “It’s not a matter of holding back any information. But as a Jew, my sympathies are so clearly with one side in this instance that I’m no longer capable of seeing things objectively. I’m sorry.”

Rostow’s confession of ineradicable bias caught the others in the room completely off guard. There was a moment of pained silence. Then the President spoke. “Thank the good Lord,” he said, “your father wasn’t Vietnamese.” The quip amused no one.

“All right,” Johnson said, “Dean, you start off.”

“Mr. President,” Rusk said, “you probably recall that at one point during the ’56 Suez business, French and British warships sailed straight for Egypt. The only thing that stood between

them and their target was the U.S. Sixth Fleet. When they approached our ships, they asked them to get out of the way. Well, the American admiral in command refused, but he sent Foster Dulles a message asking: 'Whose side am I on, anyway?' Mr. President, there may have been some doubt then, but I strongly submit there isn't a shadow of a doubt now. We cannot, for a dozen reasons, let Israel go down the drain."

"I'll take those reasons, one by one," the President said.

"Well, first of all," Rusk said, "it's true that we don't have a treaty with Israel, but we have verbal guarantees for Israel's integrity from four Presidents, including yourself.

"Second, if we fail to come to the defense of a small nation threatened with clear-cut aggression, then I don't guarantee that anyone will ever take our word very seriously. That's the whole point of why we are in Vietnam.

"Third, an unhindered victory by the Egyptians will provide Nasser with the last boost he needs to topple the rest of the dominoes in the Middle East. I would not be prepared to gamble on how long Hussein and Faisal would last after that. Within six months, Nasser could have total control of southern Arabia. And that wedge could move farther south into Africa. Our entire East African front will be endangered. Nasser's victory could also push Iran and Turkey closer to Egypt and, eventually, toward the Soviet sphere. Our southern NATO flank might then be turned. All this obviously would have the most serious repercussions on our international security planning.

"Five—"

"You left out four," Johnson interrupted.

"I did?" Rusk said. "I'm sorry; four. The Soviet threat. If I know my Russians, they'll stand aside just as they have in Vietnam. What choice do they really have? Once we've committed ourselves, the stakes are completely different. Then their only choice is either to stay out or make it a confrontation between them and us. And if I judge them correctly, they're not prepared to confront us because if they do, they're bound to lose and they know it. They backed down in Cuba; they'll back down now.

“Five, there’s the moral consideration. No matter what we may privately think to ourselves about our military friends who rule South Vietnam, Israel is a genuine democracy. It’s part of the West. Walt isn’t the only American—Jew or Gentile—who feels as though he’s got a stake in Israel.

“Six—and I think most important—we *can* intervene. We’ve got the capability. No matter how bad things look now, the Sixth Fleet can certainly hold the fort for twenty-four or forty-eight hours while we get ready to back up a threat of intervention. I understand from our generals that an actual landing would be costly and difficult. But in my view, if it comes to that and we don’t do it, it will be unforgivable.”

There was a moment of silence while the President scribbled some notes. Then he looked up and said: “Well, that’s only half a dozen reasons, but they’re all damned good ones. Bob, what do you think?”

McNamara stood directly in front of the President’s desk, clutching the black leather binder in both hands. “I think,” he said, “that I wouldn’t like anything more than to be able to go in and save Israel. With all my heart, I believe that’s the right course. I agree with Dean: that would be the right thing to do. But I think Dean would agree with *me* that we’re not paid to tell you what’s right and wrong. That would be too easy. We’ve got to think of the probable consequences of our actions. Christ, where we sit, we can’t always do what we think is right.” McNamara turned to Rostow, who was standing in the middle of the room. “I’m sorry, Walt. I don’t think we can risk it.”

Rostow almost felt sorry for McNamara. He had never heard the normally incisive Secretary of Defense ramble on so incoherently. His short speech had bordered on the maudlin. Not knowing what to say, Rostow nodded his head in a gesture of understanding.

The President was equally surprised. First Rostow, now McNamara acting out of character. Johnson felt as though he had suddenly discovered a dangerous fissure in the once rock-solid foundation of his inner circle. He made a mental note to seek some expert advice from outside the Administration. This damn summer cold, he thought, slowed down my reflexes.

Even McNamara was aware of the bad impression he had made. "So much for the sermons and soda water," he said, trying to get back onto firm ground. "Let me begin by pointing out what some of us may have overlooked. The series of Hot Line exchanges with the Kremlin has been very instructive. Since the first one went out Monday morning, there have been eleven exchanges, and the twelfth one's coming up at nine thirty tonight, our time."

Dealing with facts rather than emotions, McNamara seemed his old self again. The words and phrases tumbled out in rapid-fire succession, projecting the image of a man who knew exactly what he wanted to say and how to say it.

"In all of the messages," he continued, "the Russians have made one thing repeatedly clear: they'll sit this one out if we do. I know we're all used to hearing the Russians rattle the saber, but this time I think we should take what they say seriously. This morning I received a crash NIE [National Intelligence Estimate prepared by the CIA] that the Soviet Union *might* be prepared to risk nuclear war to keep us out of the Middle East."

"They came up with that same estimate during the Cuban missile crisis," Rusk snorted.

"Yes," McNamara said, "but that doesn't make them wrong this time. Besides, we've got supporting evidence. One phrase—the same identical phrase—has cropped up in all but the first message we've received from the Kremlin. It goes like this: 'fully prepared to resist any attempt by external powers to interfere.' Now I've had our experts check on this, and we found that the Russians have never—even during the Cuban missile affair—never used the phrase 'fully prepared to resist.' Of course, you might say that we have no sign that the Russians are mobilizing forces. But I think this is exactly the danger. They don't have the capability of deploying forces to the area, and yet they're signaling us that they'll have to take action if we do. Even if they flinch from risking nuclear war, they still have a number of alternatives. They could turn Fidel loose on Latin America. They could bring up the whole Berlin business again. They could really make things rough for us in Vietnam

by delivering new weapons systems such as the STYX [surface-to-surface missile] to Hanoi. They could pour all sorts of planes and equipment into Egypt and get us bogged down in a major land war in the Mideast. Or, more likely—and this is my number one concern—they could make a move in Iran and drive a real wedge into the Middle East. Maybe we can bluff them out of the game, but I think there's at least a seventy-three chance that they'll move if we do."

"What if I'm prepared to accept those odds?" the President asked.

"Okay," McNamara said, "I'm further prepared to argue that intervention isn't all that simple. Right now we can bring to bear the two aircraft carriers maneuvering in the Mediterranean. Even then, they would require twenty-four hours to position and target properly. Each of the carriers has, say, one hundred aircraft. Actually, the total number of fighters available is one hundred and five—hardly enough to cope with the six to seven hundred planes the Arabs can still throw into the air. To stop the Arabs and turn them back would ultimately require a sizable ground invasion. But we are in no position to mount this kind of operation. The Sixth Fleet has eighteen hundred combat-ready Marines—a token force, considering the fact that Nasser's put ninety thousand men, including two armored divisions, into battle and has another ninety thousand in immediate reserve. If we pull troops out of Germany at a time like this, the Germans would howl. And with good reason—we'd just be advertising our weakness to the Russians. And for us to deploy two brigades into the area from the States—say, the ten thousand men of the Second and Third brigades of the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky—to put that kind of manpower into action, with all their weapons, vehicles and equipment, would take possibly a week, maybe as long as ten days. To deploy a full division would naturally take even longer, and it would mean that we were scraping the bottom of our Active Strategic Reserves. It would leave us with only three complete Army divisions in the United States—the First and Second Armored at Fort Hood, Texas, and the Fifth Mechanized at Fort Carson, Colorado—ready for immediate de-

ployment overseas in the event of a new emergency. Finally, even if you wanted to go through this drill, we couldn't deploy by air. There aren't any airfields left in Israel to land troops. We'd have to drop paratroops and develop an airhead. We'd be facing a well-dug-in enemy and have to fight for a beachhead. In short, we'd be up against a miniature Normandy invasion.

"To all this I want to add what I think is the most important consideration of the lot. Any commitment in the Middle East is bound to have an enormous impact on our posture in Vietnam. You know our troop profile every bit as well as I do, Mr. President. Short of a full-scale mobilization—and all the fantastic economic dislocation that implies—we would not be able to supply Westmoreland with the additional troops he's asked for. Without those troops, I seriously doubt that Westy can keep up the pressure on the enemy. He's already bitten off a hell of a lot by trying to search-and-destroy and pacify at the same time. If we make a mistake, it's going to come out of Westy's hide."

"I don't accept your assumptions," said Rusk. "I think it's incredible that the Russians would move toward a confrontation over this affair. I'm sure that if we promised the Israelis help, they could hold the fort long enough for us to jump in and blunt the Arab blow. And as for Vietnam, I'm sure we're doing a lot better than you give us credit for. Westmoreland's success or failure is not riding on whether he gets another ten or twenty thousands troops next week."

"Okay, let's get away from Vietnam for a moment," McNamara said. "The heart of the matter is that the way things are going, the Joint Chiefs tell me the Israelis can't hold out much longer than another week. In fact, the estimate is six more days. As for the Russians, don't forget they have an enormous investment in arms and prestige in this war. Our intelligence is that they're looking on this as an opportunity to recoup all the reversals they've suffered over the past few years. I don't think they're prepared to muff this one."

"Well, this is just fine," the President broke in. "Just jim-dandy. I call together three of my best men, and one of you clams up and the other two can't even agree on what we should

do.” Johnson was obviously angry. “First of all, I want the three of you—*all* three of you—to go back to the drawing board and come up with a solid recommendation. Tomorrow morning. Meantime, whatever we decide to do, I want those ships moved closer and into position. I want to get another tough note off to Nasser right away—and Dean, you make sure that your boys shovel in plenty of threats between the lines. Another thing, I want you to work up some kind of alert in Germany, not the whole shebang, but enough to let the Russians know that we’re just as—what’s their phrase?”

“Fully prepared to resist,” McNamara said.

“Right. Fully prepared to resist,” Johnson said. “But I want to stress that my decision—my final decision—is still very much open and that no one is to take any action that forecloses that decision to me. I want to be able to say ‘stop’ any time I want to. I can only add that at this moment I lean very reluctantly toward Bob’s appraisal. I’m not sure we can intervene even if we want to. It doesn’t look like the Russians are in a position to sit still if we go in, that’s for sure.”

The President got up and walked to the French windows. It was dark outside. The spotlights on the lawn of the rose garden had been turned on.

“I’ll think on it,” he said.

Thursday, June Eighth

Rabbi Elmer Berger, a tall, scholarly-looking man in his early sixties, stood on the corner of Fifty-seventh Street and Third Avenue and glanced at the marquee of the Sutton Theater. *The Jokers*, starring Michael Crawford, was playing. For a brief moment, the rabbi was tempted to take in the movie. Why not? he thought, almost moving his lips as he formed the idea. Even Michael Crawford—whoever he is—must be better company than a bunch of hysterical Zionists.

Berger resisted the urge to escape into the dark recesses of the movie theater. Like it or not, he had agreed to attend the meeting—and the rabbi always kept his promises. The invitation had arrived by telegram the day before. “In view of the tragic situation in the Middle East,” it had said, “we invite a representative of your organization to join us in exploring what actions the Jews of America can take.” The telegram was signed: “Prinz—Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.”

The telegram, Berger realized, represented history in the making. For Berger was the chief spokesman (and, as the newspapers never tired of putting it, “chief dialectician”) of a small but militantly anti-Zionist group called the American Council for Judaism. Since it was anti-Zionist and therefore hardly well disposed toward Israel, the group had never before been invited to join the Presidents Conference—an executive body made up of representatives of twenty-one American Jewish organizations. It was only after two days of heated debate that the Jewish leaders decided to invite the anti-Zionists. The rationale that finally persuaded them to take this unusual step:

Berger's contacts with Arab diplomats in New York might come in handy if the situation continued to deteriorate and the Presidents Conference decided to enter into negotiations with the Arabs on behalf of Israel.

Even as Berger was toying with the temptation to turn back, a taxi pulled up at the corner and discharged a passenger. Berger shrugged, climbed in and told the driver: "Five-fifteen Park Avenue." The cab drove up Fifty-seventh, turned right on Park and stopped in front of the offices of the Jewish Agency for Israel. Berger, by now thoroughly steeled for the confrontation, got out, walked briskly past the street-front entrance of the Bank of Israel and took an elevator to the eighth floor.

There was a palpable atmosphere of tension inside the large conference room which served as a meeting place for the Presidents Conference. The men and women seated around the table had been in almost constant session since Monday morning, when the first word of the war reached New York. When Berger walked in, a sudden quiet filled the room. Then three or four men stood up and crowded around Berger in a slightly forced show of warmth.

"I appreciate what it means for you to come here, Berger," one of them said.

"I'm not sure I should have," Berger answered bluntly.

"Well, now that you have, why don't you take a seat?"

"Gentlemen," said Dr. Joachim Prinz, the German-born president of the American Jewish Congress, "it's time that we began. Premier Eshkol's statement of yesterday makes it clear that the situation in Israel is critical. It seems to me that our role—the role, that is, of the Presidents Conference—is marked out for us. On"—here Prinz consulted some notes—"May 19, two weeks before the Arabs attacked Israel, we sent the following telegram to President Johnson: 'We respectfully request our government to make known to the world now its commitment to safeguard Israel's territorial integrity and security.' Then, on the morning of June 5, we issued the following statement to the press: 'We call on our government to employ whatever means may be necessary to support the people of Israel in their struggle for survival.' Today is June 8, and as of ten this morn-

ing, these and all other pleas have gone unanswered. The time has come to press our case more forcefully. It appears—I see that Mr. Torczyner wants to say a word. Mr. Torczyner.”

“Thank you, Dr. Prinz.” The speaker was Jacques Torczyner, the president of the 100,000-member Zionist Organization of America, one of the most militant Zionist groups in the country.

“You say that we must press our case more forcefully,” Torczyner began. “I can’t help but agree with you. But I fear that some of our definitions of ‘forceful’ are likely to be quite different.”

Torczyner ran his hand over his broad forehead and surveyed the people around the table. “Whatever our personal loyalties to Israel”—his eyes lingered on Berger for a fraction of a second—“it seems to me that we can agree that the time for words is past. Now it is time for action.”

Torczyner, a polished public speaker, paused for effect.

“When we first met on Monday—was it only three short days ago?—we agreed on certain almost procedural things. Telegrams to Senators, fund drives, ads in newspapers across the country, rallies of support for our besieged brethren. In short, we did pretty much the usual thing. Fine. I understand that as of yesterday afternoon the UJA and bond drives had already raised somewhere in the vicinity of nearly twenty-seven million dollars in emergency funds. Fine.”

Torczyner took a sip of water, then continued.

“But now I put it to you that it is time to start with the *un-usual*. I have always taken the position that Israel’s security is a matter of concern not only for American Jews but for Americans whatever their religion. Now, however, it seems we can no longer ignore the obvious; the safety of Israel is apparently *not* the concern of the American public. Therefore, we must make it the concern of the American Jews.”

“Surely,” interrupted Dr. William A. Wexler, president of the B’nai B’rith International Council, “our main emphasis should be to get the United States government to intervene on behalf of Israel.”

Torczyner smiled grimly. “Some of us have already taken the liberty of sounding out people in the Administration. We asked

them whether the United States could at least send aircraft to aid Israel. You know what they answered? Some of you may find the phrase has a familiar ring to it. They answered that there were 'tremendous technical problems.' Some of you may remember that during World War II—I believe it was January, 1944*—our people personally appealed to the British Foreign Minister to destroy the Nazi railways carrying Jews from Hungary to concentration camps in southern Poland. British bombers at that time were flying from Foggia in Italy. Fifty-seven days later, gentlemen—*fifty-seven days*—the Foreign Office turned down the appeal because of, and I quote, 'the very great technical difficulties involved,' unquote. The phrase is burned on my mind. 'The very great technical difficulties involved.' It didn't matter, anyhow. By then, most of the Jews in Hungary had been exterminated."

Here Morris B. Abrams, the president of the American Jewish Committee, interrupted. "Where is all this leading?"

"I'll tell you where it's leading, gentlemen." Torczyner's emotions were beginning to get the best of him. "During World War Two, the Jewish leaders in America knew what was going on in Europe, but they didn't raise hell in Washington because they were afraid of offending the Administration. They accepted explanations like 'technical difficulties' when they should have been screaming their heads off. Gentlemen, shortly after the British used that excuse, their bombers flying from Foggia struck at Warsaw—four hundred miles farther than the targets that they had been asked to hit." By this time Torczyner's voice had become shrill. "Four hundred miles. Gentlemen, the lesson is vital; we must act ourselves. There are thousands of young people—Jews and non-Jews—besieging the Jewish Agency and Israeli consulates across the country, volunteering to fight. We must help organize them. We must find men, planes, guns, ammunition—and if the U.S. government won't send them, we must find ships to send them."

"All this is very instructive, of course," someone said quietly from the other side of the room. "But I, too, question where it

* In fact, it was July 6, 1944.

is getting us.” All heads turned to see that the speaker was Rabbi Berger.

Berger stood up. “Since you were so kind as to invite us here today, I would like to say a few words. I submit that the reports coming from the Israeli government are designed, understandably, to scare the American government into acting. I also suggest that it is inconceivable that Israel, with its modern arms and know-how, could be knuckling under so quickly. I also submit that the United States government knows this and that this more than likely accounts for U.S. inaction. I only want to add that I would consider it a disaster of the first order if the Zionists in America are allowed to panic the United States into an action that could involve it in another war at this time—or in a major confrontation with the Soviet Union. Think of the repercussions on American Jewry if, in the years to come, it becomes clear that Jewish leaders were responsible for pushing the United States into a Mideast war. No, gentlemen, what we need now more than anything else is uncontestable information. Not excited news reports. Not blown-up propaganda reports. Not lessons in history. Uncontestable information.”

“That’s exactly what I told you we would hear from the American Council for Judaism,” Torczyner sneered. “The Egyptians are gassing Jews, and people in this room make fine speeches.”

“I resent that,” Berger snapped.

“Gentlemen, gentlemen,” said Prinz, “this is not what we’ve come to discuss.”

And so it went for the next two and a half hours. Toward the end of the meeting, as the debate between Torczyner and Berger reached almost name-calling proportions, Dr. Wexler of the B’nai B’rith introduced a resolution. “Be it resolved,” the resolution said, “that the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, in its determined effort to save the State of Israel from annihilation, agrees to bring to bear on the President, the members of Congress and the American public at large every conceivable legal pressure at its disposal, including most notably a mass march on the nation’s capital. In

addition, the Conference of Presidents hereby endorses and extends its full support to Dr. Joachim Prinz and other prominent members of the American Jewish community in their meeting with President Lyndon Baines Johnson scheduled for later today, June 8, 1967 . . .”

The resolution was adopted with only two dissenting voices. For diametrically opposed reasons, Jacques Torczyner and Rabbi Elmer Berger stalked out of the meeting—Torczyner to organize a program for airlifting American Jewish volunteers to Israel, and Berger to issue an appeal for “thoughtfulness at a time of crisis.” *

It was a moment Lyndon Johnson had been hoping to avoid. Since Monday, members of his Administration had parried one request after another from leaders of the American Jewish community for a face-to-face meeting with the President. “Believe you me,” Hubert Humphrey explained to overwrought delegations of Jews, “your President is doing as much for Israel as he would for his own country.” But as the week wore on, the Jews refused to be assuaged by such rhetoric, and finally Mr. Johnson grudgingly assented to a meeting.

Yet, if the President could not avoid a personal confrontation with the Jews, he could at least arrange one on his own terms. Accordingly, he telephoned his old friend, Associate Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas, and laid down rigid ground rules for the meeting. To begin with, it was to be strictly secret. “No leaks to the press before or after,” Mr. Johnson insisted to Fortas. The Jewish leaders were to come in by a side entrance, spend thirty minutes with the President in the White House dining room, and leave the same way they came. Finally, LBJ wanted Fortas, a man who had never been notably active in Jewish affairs, to act as unofficial chairman of the group. “Abe,” the President said, “I want a civilized meeting between civilized

* While the representatives of several other Zionist groups supported Torczyner’s call for direct action, they backed Wexler’s motion for the sake of unity. Nevertheless, their organizations quickly joined forces with the ZOA and within a day registered the names of 17,564 volunteers to fight in Israel. Registration was stopped when it became apparent that there was no longer any way for the volunteers to enter Israel.

men. I'm the President of all the people—Jews and Gentiles—and I intend to be treated as such."

Fortas went to work quickly. He drew up an agenda for the meeting and sent it to Dr. Joachim Prinz. "I assume," Fortas wrote in an accompanying memo, "you agree our group should be kept small so as to ensure that during the meeting with the President, each of us will have the opportunity to make his points effectively, and that those points and the response they elicit from the President will be held in the strictest confidence. I would therefore be grateful if you would nominate two other men who have distinguished themselves in public affairs for this delicate assignment." Wisely Prinz selected the two men he thought would carry the greatest influence with the President. His choices: financier Phillip Klutznick, a former president of B'nai B'rith and a man who once served with the rank of ambassador as a U.S. delegate to the United Nations; and industrialist Abraham Feinberg, a wealthy member of the Democratic National Committee who was currently serving as president of the Israel Bond Organization and chairman of the board of governors of the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel.

So it was that mid-Thursday afternoon, Lyndon Johnson found himself sitting down to buttered rolls and coffee with four very polite citizens of the Jewish faith.

"Mr. President," Fortas began, "I would like to express our gratitude for allowing us to come at a time when we all realize you are deeply burdened by the events in the Middle East."

"Well, Abe," the President said, "I completely sympathize with the feelings of my Jewish friends. And I want to say that if any of you can point out something that I should be doing that I haven't tried to do to get this matter settled, well, I'm here to listen and learn. That's why I wanted to meet you today. To listen and to learn."

Joachim Prinz raised his index finger in a casual attempt to catch Johnson's attention.

"Now, Rabbi Prinz," the President said, "there's no need for you to raise your hand. You just go ahead and tell me what's weighing on your heart."

Prinz bridled. "Mr. President," he said in his slight German accent, "you and I have talked before. True, you weren't President then, but I didn't feel then, and I do not feel now, compelled to raise my hand." Suddenly Prinz realized how unimportant it was to argue the point, and he calmed down. "Mr. President, I have a few things, as you say, that are weighing on my heart, and I'm afraid that in these surroundings I will not find the appropriate words to express myself as I would wish to. I am a Jew, yes, but I am also an American. A man can be both without feeling any division of loyalty. It is as an American who happens to be a Jew that I appeal to you, sir. Israel and America are inextricably linked to one another. It was America, you know, that historically and morally and materially helped create and foster this tiny State of Israel. And it is only America now that can save Israel from total destruction. Israel symbolizes the ability of a small nation to thrive and develop in peace. A free man cannot sit by, Mr. President, and watch another free man perish without losing some of his own freedom, not to mention his self-respect. As I say, I have not found the words. But I think you understand my heart. The fate of the soul of the United States, the greatest free nation on the earth, is what is at stake here. We cannot betray ourselves by betraying Israel."

Prinz leaned forward in his seat, staring directly at the President. His left hand was still raised in a gesture of speaking. But he just sat there, silently, waiting for some response.

When the President realized that Prinz had finished speaking, he too leaned forward and, for a fleeting moment, put a hand on Prinz's knee.

"Mr. Prinz," he said, "you have spoken eloquently. I wish all our Jewish citizens understood as well as you do how important it is in certain circumstances for free men to stand up and be counted."

Prinz nodded in agreement, thinking that the news was going to be better than he had dared hope.

"That's exactly what I was driving at," the President continued, "when I told the Jewish War Veterans a few weeks ago that I was distressed at the number of Jewish citizens who criticize this Administration's goals in Vietnam. And you can imag-

ine, Rabbi Prinz, how baffling it seems to us that the same Jewish groups that now want us to go into Israel have been urging us to hightail it out of Vietnam. Downright baffling.”

Prinz was instantly aware that the President was using this opportunity to express his pique at the Jews for opposing him on Vietnam. And it suddenly dawned on him that this meeting with Johnson could turn into a bargaining session.

“Perhaps, Mr. President, your point is well taken,” Prinz said. “But if it is important to—how did you put it?—stand up and be counted in Vietnam, it is equally important to commit America to the defense of Israel. Surely a failure to defend freedom in the Middle East can only undermine the lesson you hope to teach the world in the Far East.”

Before Johnson could respond, Abraham Feinberg broke in. A tall, gruff, muscular man, Feinberg sounded like the successful businessman he was. “It seems to me, Mr. President,” he said, “that honest men can differ honestly over Vietnam. But I’m willing to wager you’ll find few Americans and fewer members of our great Democratic party who have any doubt about this country’s obligation to save Israel. If I might be permitted to speak bluntly, I can’t imagine a Democratic Administration failing to honor its obligations to Israel. That obligation is part of our political makeup. As Dr. Prinz said, there’s more at stake here than just Israel.”

“As long as we’re speaking bluntly,” Mr. Johnson replied, rather more heatedly than he intended to, “I’m just as aware as anybody of the enormous contribution the Jews in America have made to the greatness of our party. And I think I’ve made a real effort to demonstrate our gratitude in meaningful ways. But that misses the point altogether. Our party isn’t on trial here. It’s the State of Israel. And if anybody’s let anybody down, it’s the leadership in Jerusalem. I can tell you, gentlemen, that time and time again the government of Israel has assured us that it could take care of itself in almost any conceivable circumstance. Why, only a few weeks ago, the Eshkol government gave us just that kind of assurance. And even after the war broke out and things looked bad, the Israelis came to us and they said, ‘Now don’t you fret; we’ll hold out for as long as

it takes you to get this thing straightened out.' But they haven't been able to hold out. Their intelligence was mistaken. If only they'd been able to do better, we would have had more time and some room to maneuver."

There was a moment of silence as his listeners digested the meaning of Mr. Johnson's words. He seemed to be implying that the United States was going to stand by and do nothing.

"At a historic turning point like this," Phillip Klutznick said, "even too late is better than not at all. My God, the Arabs are using poison gas. There must be something we can do, with all our enormous power, to stave off this disaster."

"I wish it were that simple," the President said. "But I'm afraid it isn't. As for the poison gas, we have no confirmation on that. And anyway, as Rabbi Prinz here pointed out, there's more at stake than Israel. If we try to go in and fail, we'll be in a very tough spot when it comes to the next round with the other side. And I can assure you there will be a next round—and a next and a next. The Russians aren't just going to sit on their behinds, gentlemen. We don't want this thing blowing up into a full-scale world war."

"The Russians would never be so crazy," Feinberg exclaimed.

"That's one bet," the President said, "I'm not ready to make."

Prinz's index finger shot up, then dropped self-consciously back to his lap.

"Mr. President," Prinz said, shaking his head back and forth, "I for one am not prepared to accept the thesis that there is nothing to be done. I have heard that proposition before. It is to the discredit of the Jewish leaders of America that in the past they accepted this thesis without speaking out. We will not make that mistake again. This is not 1942, Mr. President. The Administration cannot pretend, as it did then, that it does not know what is happening to millions of Jews. And those of us who are unfortunate enough to be in a position of leadership cannot comfort ourselves with these claims."

Johnson's face hardened. "What are you suggesting, Rabbi?"

"I'm suggesting, Mr. President, that we cannot and will not

sit quietly by and let silence cloak another holocaust.”

Immediately Johnson had visions of Prinz complaining to reporters on the doorstep of the White House as soon as he left the meeting.

“It was my understanding—and please correct me if I’m wrong, Abe—that this session was to be strictly off the record,” Johnson said coldly.

“That is our understanding, too, Mr. President,” Fortas answered.

Both Johnson and Fortas looked at Prinz.

“When I talked of speaking out,” Prinz explained, “I meant in the larger sense. I was not referring to this meeting.”

For a long moment no one spoke.

“Perhaps,” Fortas said quietly, “if the President told us what steps he was taking—”

“We’re using every diplomatic lever at our disposal,” the President replied. “We’ve already got a cease-fire resolution at the United Nations, and I can assure you we’re working night and day to try and make it stick. I’ve got my best men assigned to this. Avo Harriman is working on the Russians, and if anybody can bring the Russians into line, it’s him.”

“What if diplomacy fails?” Prinz asked.

“In that case,” Klutznick said dryly, “the only thing we’ll have to worry about is refugees.”

“Yes,” Prinz said, “what about refugees?”

The President’s normally expressive face went blank, and the four men sitting around him wondered whether the Administration had begun to consider the human consequences of an Israeli defeat.

“Surely,” Prinz said in a grave voice, “you must realize that even if this country is willing to consign Israel to oblivion, we have an inescapable moral duty to open our gates to the thousands upon thousands of Jews who will ask for asylum.”

“It is inconceivable to me,” Klutznick began, “that we—”

“I can still remember,” Prinz broke in, “as though it were yesterday, how this country stood by without lifting a finger while the Jews of Europe were herded into Hitler’s gas ovens.

‘The quotas,’ they told us, ‘the quotas.’ They would not lift the immigration quotas to save a few thousand Jewish necks. They would not waste precious bombs to destroy the crematoriums. They would not send money to buy back the lives of helpless Jewish women and children. And now what? Perhaps you will tell me that Nasser is no Hitler. And perhaps you are right. There will never be another Hitler. But give them the chance and the Arabs will expunge the Jews of Israel. Not as efficiently as the Germans did, of course. But they will expunge them nevertheless. Surely you are not prepared, Mr. President, to watch this happen.”

“Are you suggesting that I am?” Lyndon Johnson demanded.

“No,” Prinz said, uncowed by the threatening tone used by the President. “I was just asking.”

“Well, then, let me tell you this,” the President said. “For the past three days I’ve spent every one of my waking hours—and some of my sleeping ones, too—brooding how we can bring this war to an honorable end and how we can save the lives of all those innocent people caught up in this tragic dispute. I wasn’t elected President to consign—I think that was the word you used—I’m not consigning anybody to oblivion, Rabbi Prinz. I’m not going to use any excuses about quotas. I’m just going to go on doing the best job I know how to see that the guns stop firing and that the two sides sit down and start reasoning with each other instead of shooting each other. I have no excuses to make, as I said. And if there are some people who knock on our gates and want to get in later, well, there’s lots of room in this country, and I’m sure they’ll find us ready to give them a generous welcome. But frankly, I don’t think it will come to that. I think that the diplomats will triumph over the generals. They usually do, you know. I’m staking my faith that diplomacy’ll work this time, too.”

“Yes, but I repeat, Mr. President, what if diplomacy fails?” Prinz asked.

Exasperated, the President chose to ignore the question. Instead, he looked at Abe Fortas, then down at his wristwatch.

“I see,” said Fortas, “that we’ve already overstayed our thirty

minutes, Mr. President. I think I speak for all of us when I say how much we appreciate your time.”

“I’m only sorry,” Lyndon Johnson said, “that I couldn’t give you more encouraging news.”

Even as the Fortas delegation slipped quietly out of the West Wing of the White House, Jews from all over the United States were converging on the manicured mall in front of the Lincoln Memorial—that cherished American symbol of man’s compassion for his fellow man. They came to demonstrate their solidarity with the beleaguered State of Israel. And not since the 1963 civil rights march on Washington had the nation seen such an outpouring of mass emotion.

There was no particular order to the marchers as they spilled down Constitution and Independence avenues, past the mobile first-aid stations and mobile toilets, toward the rotunda on the bank of the Potomac. In the first line of march was a group of clergymen—rabbis with blue and white prayer shawls around their necks, Protestant ministers and black-coated Catholic priests. Right behind the clergymen came 200 young boys and girls who had walked all the way from Philadelphia carrying banners that read: “Why Vietnam and Not Israel?” There were representatives from each of the country’s 879 synagogues and Jewish community centers, and from almost every one of the 212 Jewish organizations in the United States—Hadassah, B’nai B’rith, the Hillel university clubs, the Jewish War Veterans, Pioneer Women, the Labor Zionists, the American Zionist Youth Council, the Federation of Temple Youth, the United Synagogue Youth, Young Israel. A group of bearded Hassidic students, dressed in broad-brimmed black hats and long Chesterfield coats, sung psalms as they ambled by. A phalanx of Jewish labor leaders, marching along with their arms linked, chanted the same Socialist slogans they had used since the 1930’s. Survivors of Nazi concentration camps, wearing yellow paper Stars of David on their breasts, carried banners proclaiming in both Hebrew and English: “*Zkor*—Remember.” And in the midst of the surging crowd came thousands of ordinary mid-

dle-class Jews whose only contact with organized Jewish life was a dutiful yearly contribution to the United Jewish Appeal.

All told, some 150,000 people assembled in front of the Lincoln Memorial in what newspaper headline writers called the "March on Washington II." Tens of thousands more were stranded at train or bus stations in Washington, or caught in the crush of cars on the highways leading into the capital. In New York, 2,500 people were lined up outside the Eastern Airlines shuttle terminal at LaGuardia Airport, waiting patiently for planes to Washington. And across the country, hundreds of thousands of the nation's 5.7 million Jews sat riveted to their television sets, drawn by some vague and inarticulate "Jewishness" to the spectacle.

There was one momentary outbreak of violence when some young Zionists, wearing identical blue work shirts and khaki trousers, attacked a group of uniformed neo-Nazis carrying a banner that read: "Let the Arabs Finish What Hitler Started." Police tore the two groups apart, arrested four of the Zionists and returned the sign to the neo-Nazis. One of the Zionists, in his late twenties, struggled to get free of the two policemen who held him in their grasp. "I am the last surviving member of a family that died at Buchenwald," he screamed, then collapsed in uncontrollable sobs.

But by and large, things went remarkably well. Inevitably some minor technical problems cropped up, attributable no doubt to the fact that the whole affair had been organized on forty-eight hours' notice. It soon became apparent, for example, that there were not enough mobile toilets to accommodate the crowd. And just before the program began, the public address system broke down in a prolonged wailing feedback. An argument broke out between the organizers of the march—the Ad Hoc Committee to Save Israel (SAVE)—and a group of militant young rabbis who wanted to chain themselves to the front gate of the White House after the march was over. (Older, wiser heads prevailed, and in the end the rabbis took up a silent vigil across the street from the White House and vowed to remain there until President Johnson intervened on behalf of Israel.)

The program itself was opened by an elderly cantor—a survivor of the Nazi holocaust—who chanted the dirgelike “Mi Makim,” which begins, “From the depths of our hearts, O Lord” and is reserved for moments of impending disaster. Then the speeches began. Fresh from his meeting with the President, Rabbi Joachim Prinz started off by tracing the history of the Jews and the land of Israel back 4,000 years to a dialogue between Abraham and a God called Yahweh, and wound up his talk with a stirring reminder that the world could not allow the dialogue to be drowned out by guns and bombs. Next, the voice of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., echoed from one loudspeaker to another as he declared: “Four years ago, I stood upon these same hallowed steps and said, ‘I have a dream.’ Today, I have another dream—a dream of a day when minorities, whether black or white, whether Jew or Gentile, will stand unafraid of oppression.” The Right Reverend James A. Pike, retired Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of California, looked out over the vast audience and chided those who called it a strictly Jewish demonstration. “This is more than a sectarian gathering,” he said. “It is an American demonstration of support for a valiant nation that needs—and rates—our help.” And George Meany vowed: “Organized labor supports Israel.”

One after another, the famous and the not-so-famous stepped to the microphone: A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Pullman Sleeping Car Porters; Frank Sinatra; Sammy Davis, Jr.; Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Louis Finkelstein, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary; Kirk Douglas; Harry Belafonte. Some who couldn’t be there in person sent telegrams of support for the march. Richard Cardinal Cushing cabled: “Christians everywhere support the heroic battle for the survival of the State of Israel. Let us pray that peace will return to the Middle East.” And Johnny Carson cabled: “I know I speak for hundreds of my fellow entertainers when I say that an incredible catastrophe has befallen America.”

Then came the politicians. With barely controlled fury, New York’s senior Senator, Jacob Javits, accused the Johnson Ad-

ministration of making a “mockery” of the American commitment in Vietnam. “We are spending thirty billion dollars a year to defend a dictatorship, yet we refuse to lift a hand in defense of a truly democratic state.”

The high point of the emotion-charged afternoon came when Robert Kennedy, ashen-faced and shaken, stood up and addressed the crowd. Brushing the hair off his forehead, he began to talk quietly about the achievements of the State of Israel—the deserts that bore fruit, the cities that grew in a wasteland. He spoke of Israel as a “tiny outpost of Western culture and ideas.” He declared: “This gallant democracy, this nation of survivors from history’s greatest example of man’s capacity for senseless cruelty to his fellow men, cannot be allowed to succumb to the threats and assaults of her neighbors.” Stabbing a finger at the audience, he recalled John F. Kennedy’s pledge to defend Israel’s sovereignty. “Our commitment to Israel is clear. If this pledge is allowed to lapse, if Israel is allowed to lose a war that it did not start, it is the United States that will be diminished. When the history books come to be written, this will go down as the moment that America sacrificed its humanitarianism to expediency, its pride to international politics, its future to outright fear.”

Toward the end of Kennedy’s speech, a light rain began to fall on Washington. The crowd, however, seemed determined to stick it out. At 5:30, Jan Peerce (whose wife, Alice, was the head of the women’s division of the Israel Bond Organization and one of the organizers of the march) walked across the stage to the microphone and invited the assembly to join him in singing the “Ani Ma’amin”—an ancient Jewish hymn of hope that once served as the rallying song of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

And so, on the damp ground under the sorrowful gaze of Abraham Lincoln, American Jews raised their voices to a God many of them had almost forgotten they believed in.

I believe, I believe, I believe . . .

In the coming of the Messiah,

And if he should falter, I shall continue to believe.

Friday, June Ninth

At his headquarters in the central Sinai city of Bir Tamada, General Abdul Muhsin Kamal Mortagi, the commander in chief of Egypt's land forces, balanced on his head in a classic yoga position. Up since before dawn, he was now taking his daily morning exercises. An aide knocked on the door of his office and entered. Slowly Mortagi dropped one leg, then another to the floor and stood upright. A stocky man with closely cropped hair, he had earned a reputation during the late 1950's, when he was chief of the Army Directorate of Training, for being a calm and sensible commander who placed great emphasis on detailed preparation. Though his campaigns in Yemen in 1964 went badly from the start, Mortagi had returned home to a hero's welcome and a promotion to full general. Yet Mortagi, a professional soldier to the core, was keenly aware of the blemish on his record, and he saw the war against Israel as an opportunity to redeem his name.

"Has General Shazali been told that the tank reinforcements we promised him are on the way?" Mortagi asked.

"Yes, General," the aide replied, "thirty T-55's were dispatched as you requested three hours ago through Wadi Kauraya and should link up with Shazali's main force on schedule."

"Good," Mortagi said. He carefully began to fit the end of a cigarette into a tortoiseshell holder. "I want to draft a general order to the rear base commanders in Kuntilla, El Quseima, Abu Aweigila and Khan Yunis." Mortagi lit the cigarette. "From General Mortagi, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera," he began to dictate with a wave of his hand. "Brothers, this is the

moment we have all been awaiting. Patiently we have held nearly half our tanks and half our infantry in reserve. The enemy is now reeling from our first-wave onslaught in the air and on the land. Today we will strike him with the mailed fist of our second wave and crush him with our full force into the sand. Our valiant comrades in the field are counting on us. We must not let them down. Your orders, as outlined in T-34B, are clear. Nothing should be spared to ensure final victory." Mortagi hesitated for a moment, then told his aide: "All right. Type that up and let me see it."

And so it was that on the fifth day of the war the Arabs resolved to launch a knockout blow against Israel. Like Mortagi, the Arab commanders in Jordan and Syria could smell the sweet scent of victory in the air, and they were prepared to commit their entire strength—including tens of thousands of fresh troops—to seal Israel's doom. No longer were they haunted by the fear that their initial successes were the result of an Israeli tactical ruse, and that once they committed their full strength the Israeli military machine would begin chewing up their battalions. "One more mighty push," Jordan's King Hussein declared in an order of the day that echoed Mortagi's sentiments, "and Palestine shall be ours forever."

Yet as the Arabs' self-confidence grew, so did their problems. Pushed beyond endurance, drowsy Arab pilots began to overshoot their targets or waste their bombs on unimportant objectives. Desperately two Egyptian generals radioed Air Force Chief of Staff Muhammed Mahmoud that their columns had been bombed by their own planes. Mahmoud, perturbed by these mistakes and the rising number of crashes suffered by his dwindling air fleet, ordered his squadron commanders to reduce the number of sorties each pilot flew in a day from three to two. To make matters worse, Egypt's ballistics rocket system proved seriously defective. After the second day of the war, when eight Egyptian rockets overshoot their targets in Israel and smashed into villages in southern Lebanon and on Jordan's west bank, General Amer ordered the Sinai missile bases deactivated.

Nor were the Arabs' mounting troubles confined to the air. As

they swept forward on almost every front, Arab units had to contend not only with a fiercely determined Israeli Army, but also with a civilian population that threw itself into battle side by side with the troops. Increasingly unable to rely on poison gas attacks as they had in the distant reaches of the Negev,* the Arabs found their advance savagely costly in manpower (casualties in some units were as high as 50 percent). Moreover, a number of Arab units began to outstrip their own supply lines. In some cases, the offensive ground to a temporary halt for lack of ammunition or gasoline for the tanks. Food was no problem, for wherever they went, the Arabs foraged off the land. But the combination of heavy casualties and fatigue reduced the effectiveness of some units to the point where they could no longer be counted on in combat.

Arab problems, however, paled beside those of the Israelis. Outnumbered, surrounded and stripped of air cover (less than twenty jet aircraft were still operational at the beginning of Friday), the Israeli Army could no longer avoid confronting the cold hard fact that it was beaten. Yam Suf—the General Staff's plan to go over to the defensive—was regarded by the ordinary Israeli soldier as a forlorn attempt to delay the inevitable. And in any case, Yam Suf was fatally flawed from its inception, for the traditionally offensive-minded Israeli Army—convinced that any war would require a lightning thrust into enemy territory—had never bothered to prepare heavy fortifications. It was all well and good to order an Israeli line officer to fall back, but the truth of the matter was, there were few defensive positions for him to go to.

Thus the Arabs made devastating inroads into Israel. In the south, the Egyptian column that had burst out of Gaza moved inexorably up the coastal road, crushing everything in its path—Ashkelon, Ashdod, Rishon Le Zion (literally, "The First in Zion," one of the first Zionist settlements in the country), Bat Yam. In a last-ditch effort, the Israelis tried to stem the tide

* Cairo steadfastly denied that it had used poison gas. In order to make that claim credible, Nasser issued strict instructions that gas was not to be employed in populated regions, where civilian witnesses or foreign diplomatic observers might later provide evidence to the contrary.

with what pitifully small reinforcements they could muster. But the Arabs, using antipersonnel bombs and napalm, surged forward through the winding streets of Jaffa, and by midafternoon Friday stood at the southern gates of Tel Aviv itself.

A second, flanking Egyptian column from Gaza moved on Beersheba. Encountering stiff resistance from Israeli Army units and North African immigrant farmers at Beit Hagaddi and Gilat, this column was reinforced on Friday morning by a fresh armored brigade dispatched by General Mortagi from Khan Yunis. By nightfall, it was within five miles of Beersheba.

General Mortagi had planned yet another pincer movement against the vital desert city. For after Task Force Shazali captured Eilat on Wednesday, it moved due north along the Israeli-Jordanian border, then cut northwest on Thursday night toward Beersheba. Unfortunately for the Egyptians, Brigadier General Avraham Yoffe was by now well entrenched at the Ramon Crater, and when Shazali appeared out of the shimmering desert on Friday morning, he was stopped in his tracks.

"I need more air strikes," Shazali radioed back. "They're in here tight, and the only way we'll get them out is to blast them out."

Like the Egyptians, the Jordanians paid dearly for every foot of conquered Israeli territory. Having once overrun Tel Yitzhak and severed Israel at its waist, the Jordanians were confronted with a difficult choice: either to employ the entire mass of their armor and infantry and push on south in a single knockout blow against Tel Aviv, or to split their column in two and drive simultaneously south toward Tel Aviv and north toward Haifa. Acting on direct orders from Cairo, Egyptian General Abdul Munim Riad tried to persuade the Jordanian High Command to attack in both directions at once. There was considerable suspicion in the Jordanian General Staff that the Egyptians wanted to split the column and thus weaken it—leaving the plum, Tel Aviv, to the Egyptians coming up from the south. Finally, after personal intervention by Nasser himself, the Jordanians conceded the point and divided their forces.

Ultimately things worked out just as the Egyptians planned. For although Hussein's southern column managed to reach Tel

Baruh on the outskirts of Tel Aviv by late Friday afternoon, its notable lack of a strong left flank resulted in enormous casualties. What is more, the Haifa column—by far the weaker of the two thrusts—soon became hopelessly bogged down between Natanya and Hadera. Moving a bit too quickly from the south, the Jordanians overlooked a strong Israeli battalion bivouacked in camouflage near Givat Haim. In one of the few instances where Yam Suf proved effective, the battalion's commander allowed the Jordanians to advance along the coastal road. Then, when the Jordanians had reached the narrow Alexander River and engaged Israeli troops along the sand dunes there, the overlooked Israeli battalion attacked from the rear.

For all its momentary reversals, the Arab juggernaut rolled on. And nowhere did the Arabs score a more impressive breakthrough than in the fertile farmland of the upper Galilee known as the Huleh Valley. Dominating the valley, the Syrians were poised in a series of basalt-walled zigzag trenches that had been built with the aid of Soviet technicians along the crest of the grim Golan Heights. Day and night, shells from eighteen battalions of artillery rained down on some of Israel's richest farmlands, relentlessly destroying the work of fifty years of pioneering. One barrage damaged the brown cupola of the Italian church on the Mount of Beatitudes—the site where Jesus is believed to have delivered the Sermon on the Mount. Other guns zeroed in to the south on Tiberias, causing severe civilian casualties. And what the Syrian artillery began, the Syrian Air Force completed. In foray after foray, MIG's attacked the National Water Project, the Israeli irrigation scheme that had its main conduits in the hills of Galilee. The ancient hilltop city of Safed, famed for its modern art colony, the immigrant town of Kiryat Shmoneh and the Zionist pioneer town of Rosh Pina were heavily damaged. And through it all, thousands of Galilee settlers huddled helplessly in their shelters.

As the Syrians' 120-millimeter guns and MIG's turned the *kibbutzim*, orchards and fields of the Galilee into a wasteland, the commander of Israel's northern front, Brigadier General David Eleazar, was more certain than ever that the Syrians were

softening up their target for a full-scale ground attack. Accordingly, Eleazar radioed Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin and asked for permission to launch a spoiling operation against the Syrian position.

“David, we’ve been over this a thousand times,” Rabin said. “The whole point of Yam Suf is for us to hold the line until the Arabs attack. You’ll have plenty of fighting when they come down from those hills.”

“I know all about Yam Suf,” Eleazar replied impatiently. “My point is that Yam Suf may be fine for Gavish in the Sinai, but it simply doesn’t make sense up here in the Galilee. Forget Yam Suf for a second and try to visualize the situation as I see it. My ground forces are being smashed, and we’re sitting here like stupid ducks. If we keep waiting, when the Syrians attack we won’t have sufficient forces to repel them. But if we can only capture one or two of the Syrians’ strongpoints, say Tel Aziziyat in the north and Fik in the south, well, then, that could be a psychological turning point. You know how the Syrians act when they get a good solid pinch on the *tahat*.”

Reluctantly Rabin agreed to Eleazar’s plan. Moving from Tel Katzir, south of the Sea of Galilee, and from Dan, at the Jordan River source in the north, the Israelis launched their assault. But even as they began to move up the purple-black ridges of the Golan Heights, they were met by a devastating fusillade of artillery and bombs.

“We’re pinned down at Hill 257,” one Israeli officer reported calmly. “There’s so much incoming that we can’t even raise our heads.”

Doggedly Eleazar ordered his troops to push forward into the wall of fire. Leading the way, Eleazar’s officers rallied their men for the desperate effort. But in every case, it proved suicidal. Soon the foothills across the reed-covered banks of the Jordan River were littered with the bodies of Israelis, a high percentage of them majors, captains and lieutenants. Finally, realizing that he was sacrificing his best troops in a hopeless cause, Eleazar ordered a general retreat.

As the Israelis began their withdrawal, the Syrians came out

after them en masse. In a multipronged attack, they pushed down the side of the heights, decimating the Israeli rear guard. One Syrian column moved out from Tel Katzir and cut off the eastern bank of the Sea of Galilee. This set off a Dunkirk-like retreat from the fishing *kibbutz* of Ein Gev. Boarding two large fishing boats and an excursion launch, hundreds of women and children, along with thirty-five American tourists who had been stranded there, headed across the huge lake toward Tiberias. But before the boats could reach the far shore, they were hit by Syrian shells and capsized. All but seventeen people lost their lives in the choppy water.

Pushing on with flame throwers and point-blank artillery, the Syrian tank armada drove across the upper valley and around the southern coast of the Sea of Galilee. And this time, they did not commit the same mistake they made during the 1948 war against Israel—namely, they did not try to crush each and every Israeli *kibbutz* and settlement that stood in their way. Instead, the Syrians had been assiduously instructed by their Russian advisers to take the line of least resistance and, wherever possible, to avoid joining battle with *kibbutz* militia forces. During the battle itself, in fact, Israeli intelligence heard advisers with distinct Russian accents radioing the Syrians: “Bypass the *kibbutz*. Stay on the main road. You’ll mop up later.” As a result, at countless *kibbutzim* such as Kinneret and at *moshavim* (small cooperative villages) such as Beit Hillel, settlers armed with guns, farm implements and Molotov cocktails watched helplessly as, within clear view less than a mile away, the Syrians passed them by.

By Friday afternoon, the Syrian columns were approaching Haifa from the east. And at this point, the Lebanese—who earlier had balked at aiding the Syrians—saw the handwriting on the wall and joined the war. A tank column from the relatively small Lebanese Army struck south, joined up with a Syrian column and moved on Acre.

At Nazareth, General Eleazar was forced to evacuate his rear-guard headquarters. But just as he stepped from his underground bunker into the rubble-strewn streets, an 82-millimeter

Syrian mortar round came whistling in. One of Eleazar's aides threw his arms around the general to protect him from the explosion. Both men were killed instantly.

To the combined Lebanese-Syrian column pushing south along the Mediterranean coast, the small (population 365) Jewish settlement of Lohamei Hageta'ot was little more than a hurdle on the road to Acre. The key to the settlement's defense was a single fortified bunker overlooking the main road. Inside, three people sat on the floor, their backs against the wall. A fourth, a thirty-nine-year-old farmer named Antek Siefertsky, peered through binoculars over the sandbagged lip of the bunker, searching the terrain according to the instructions in his military handbook—sector by sector.

"S-s-still nothing," he said.

"Why don't you take a break, Antek?" Izhu Kaminska called up to him. Kaminska pointed to a small chessboard set up on the floor in a corner. "Let's have a game."

"I d-d-d-don't m-m-mind standing watch," Siefertsky said. He continued to inspect one sector after another.

Kaminska, the acknowledged chess champion of Lohamei Hageta'ot, turned to the man sitting next to him. "How about you, Avram? A game of chess? I'll spot you a rook."

Avram Dawidowicz smiled and shook his head. "You don't have to bribe me with a rook," he said. "When I play you, I play you evenly. Anyway, let's save it for later."

"As long as you're offering, Izhu, why not offer the queen?" the person on the other side of Kaminska said. The voice, light and musical, could have belonged to a fifteen-year-old girl. But Nahama Pinkus was past forty, and her face was etched deep with lines. "What an insult to Avram, to think you can buy him off with just a rook."

Izhu took the bait. "Nahama, you don't understand the first thing about chess. The more important the piece is that I spot him, the greater the insult."

"So why spot him a piece at all, then?" Nahama asked innocently.

"To make the game more even," Izhu answered.

“Izhu, d-d-d-don’t you see N-n-n-n-nahama’s teasing you?” Sieletsky said from the edge of the bunker. “She’s up t-t-to her old t-t-t-tricks again.”

Sieletsky’s stutter, which seemed to grow more pronounced with each passing year, was one of the little details of life at Lohamei Hageta’ot that had captured the attention of an American psychiatrist who had visited the settlement a few months before. Until the psychiatrist returned home and published his monograph, in which he mentioned Sieletsky’s stutter, everyone at the settlement had assumed that Antek was simply an extremely shy man. But there was more to it than that. “The *kibbutz* farmer’s stutter,” the psychiatrist had written, “is an archetypical example of suppressed, inarticulate rage.” And the American had concluded that Sieletsky’s obstructed speech went to the very heart of the history of Lohamei Hageta’ot, for the psychological problem was rooted in the unspeakable horrors that Sieletsky and many of the other people of the settlement had experienced a generation ago during World War Two.

Lohamei Hageta’ot was, in fact, a living reminder of the grimmest—and the proudest—chapter of modern Jewish history. It was the home of some of the survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising—those forty soul-stirring days in the spring of 1943 when a mere handful of Jewish warriors, armed for the most part with homemade weapons, stood off an entire division of the Nazi Wehrmacht. Of the original 500,000 Jews who had been herded into the Warsaw Ghetto by the Germans, only hundreds were still alive in June, 1967. And of these, the hardest had carved out a new life for themselves on a barren hillside near the Lebanese border, which they had named Kibbutz Lohamei Hageta’ot, the “Ghetto Fighters’ Kibbutz.” The community had built a simple museum containing relics of life and death in the ghetto—the diary of a young girl who wrote her last entry on her thirteenth birthday, a tattered copy of an underground newspaper, assorted identity cards issued by the Germans, photographs of Jews tramping into cattle cars for the trip to concentration camps.

Now, on the morning of June 9, as the hollow thunder of Arab artillery drew closer by the hour, there were few in Lo-

hamei Hage'ta'ot who would have been ready to abandon the *kibbutz* and flee to the relative safety of Haifa. For the survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto were proud prisoners of their past. "We have not survived the holocaust," David Lubinsky, one of the leaders of the community, had cried, "to run like frightened ghetto Jews now." Accordingly, guns and ammunition from the settlement's small arsenal had been distributed to every man, woman and child over the age of fourteen.

Of the four people crammed into Sieletsky's bunker, two of them had first plunged into battle as mere teen-agers in the Warsaw Ghetto. Sieletsky himself had begun fighting in his fourteenth year. As a young ghetto fighter he had developed an uncanny talent for handling explosives. His specialty was rigging a homemade grenade in a person's armpit which detonated when a Jew lifted up his arms to surrender to the Germans. The explosion invariably killed the "surrendering" Jew, but it killed a good many Germans, too. In his fifteenth year, Sieletsky booby-trapped himself when it became clear that he was about to be caught. When he raised his arms, however, the bomb failed to explode. Sieletsky spent the rest of the war at Auschwitz, then emigrated to Israel in time to become one of the Haganah's demolition experts during the 1948 War of Independence. In 1952 he settled in Lohamei Hage'ta'ot, where each year he provided the *kibbutz* children with a fireworks display unequalled in all of Israel.

Nahama Pinkus, then a member of the Zionist Hashomer Hatzair youth movement, had led one of the Warsaw Ghetto's sniper units which were assigned to kill German officers. Captured in the last hours of the uprising, Nahama, then only seventeen, was deported to Treblinka, where her blond "Aryan" good looks saved her from the gas chamber but consigned her to a different fate; she worked as a "field whore" for Polish officers serving in the German Army. Nahama emigrated to Israel in 1949, married a carpenter whom she had known as a young girl in Warsaw and had three children—all of whom were now sheltered in a bunker three hundred yards away.

The lives of the two other members of the bunker were equally scarred by the past. Avram Dawidowicz, a scholar who

completed his doctoral thesis on Spinoza at Krakow's Jagallonian University, had organized an underground high school in the Warsaw Ghetto. At the height of the fighting in April, 1943, the twenty-seven-year-old Dawidowicz led his students into battle. He was the sole survivor of that desperate, last-ditch stand. Dawidowicz managed to escape through the ghetto's sewers, survive the war and emigrate to Israel. But until this day he had refused to teach children and instead had labored in the fields.

Izhu Kaminska, a devoted Communist, had acted as a liaison between the Warsaw Ghetto command and Polish Communist partisans operating in the countryside. Kaminska, then twenty-one, organized resistance cells within the Jewish community when the idea of revolt was still unpopular. He risked his life countless times to bring in a single pistol or a handful of bullets and agreed to abandon his bunker in Warsaw only when ordered to do so by his party superiors. One of the few ghetto fighters to link up with the Polish Communist underground, Kaminska spent the remainder of the war harassing retreating German columns. Later, his years of loyalty were rewarded with a promotion to a secure post as a party *apparatchik*. But in 1954, his erstwhile Polish comrades accused him of being a "Zionist lackey" and purged him. Three years later, Kaminska, still a convinced Communist, emigrated to Israel and became a member of Lohamei Hageta'ot. There he spent his free hours in the recreation hall, playing chess and participating in endless arguments about the historic inevitability of Marxism.

"M-m-maybe you'd better f-f-f-forget the chess g-g-game, Izhu," Sieletsky said suddenly. He was no longer panning with his binoculars, but had braced them on the parapet, frozen in one place.

"It l-l-l-looks as if we're g-g-going to be s-s-spotting them four t-t-tanks and six armored . . ."

The rest of what he said was lost in the roar of cannon.

Kaminska sprang to the mortar at the end of the bunker and began lobbing rounds at the oncoming Arabs. Nahama pressed her eye against the sight of a small periscope and called out corrections.

“Down twenty, left ten,” she shouted in her musical, little girl’s voice.

Sieletsky settled himself behind a long-barreled vintage Czech machine gun, adjusted the sights and began squeezing off short bursts. Even as he fired, Sieletsky could see Dawidowicz’s long, delicate fingers feeding the belt of bullets into the gun.

The attackers quickly realized that the linchpin of the settlement’s defense was the bunker, and they concentrated their attack on it. Geysers of dirt flew up in front of Sieletsky as the approaching enemy began to find the range. The first cannon rounds from the tanks were long, but the Lebanese and Syrians began walking the rounds down toward the bunker. The tenth round found the range, exploding just behind the bunker. A piece of shrapnel severed Kaminska’s backbone, and he fell across the mortar. The concussion from the blast knocked Nahama off her perch and sent her sprawling over the lip of the bunker. Before she could scurry back, a long burst of machine-gun fire from one of the armored cars almost tore her in half.

All this happened within the first five minutes of the battle. Sieletsky, his face contorted with rage, kept squeezing off short bursts from his gun. Soon a long skirmish line of Lebanese soldiers had passed the tanks and armored cars. Dawidowicz reached down to a crate and began lining up grenades on a ledge just in front of him. When the Lebanese were thirty yards away, he started hurling them in a long, stiff-armed lob. By now, the Lebanese were so close that the tanks and armored cars lifted their covering fire.

A bullet caught Dawidowicz in his left shoulder and spun him around. He landed next to an Uzzi submachine gun propped up against the wall. He grabbed it with his right hand and started to climb back toward Sieletsky, who was still squeezing the trigger of his machine gun—though by now he was firing longer and longer bursts. A grenade clumped onto the soft earth behind Dawidowicz. He never heard it explode; an instant before the grenade tore the back of his head off, a bullet burst into his brain just above the bridge of his nose.

By absorbing the blast from the grenade, Dawidowicz’s body had saved Sieletsky. Another grenade landed near the machine

gun, and the farmer flung it back. Through the smoke he saw the steel-helmeted Lebanese just yards away. A high-pitched scream burst from his throat. His psychological dam had burst.

“Come on, you bastards, you dirty bastards, come on,” he cried.

The stutter was gone. In its place was pure, uncontrolled rage. Two Arabs burst over the lip of the bunker. Sieletsky smashed one in the face with the butt of an Uzzi; the face dissolved in a mass of smashed flesh and bone. Sieletsky grabbed the man behind him by the neck and began squeezing out his life. Two other Lebanese climbed over the sandbags and began clubbing Sieletsky with their rifles. He spun around, screaming incoherently, and hurled himself at the throat of the nearest man. A bullet tore through Sieletsky’s stomach, then another ripped into his shoulder. A burst from a submachine gun caught him full in the chest and knocked him, arms flailing, back. He stumbled over Dawidowicz’s body, then pitched against the side of the bunker and sprawled dead across the chessboard in the corner.

Forty-seven minutes after the attack had begun, the Lebanese-Syrian column, minus thirty-seven dead soldiers, formed up at the end of the silent *kibbutz* and moved on toward Acre.

“When the world was created, ten parts of beauty were allotted the world at large. Of these, Jerusalem assumed nine measures and the rest of the world but one. Ten parts of suffering were visited upon the world—nine for Jerusalem and one for the rest of the world.”

—THE TALMUD

Correspondents covering the battle of Jerusalem had turned the stately King David Hotel, overlooking the rose-dun walls of the Old City, into a press center. By some miracle, the hotel’s Telex lines to Tel Aviv—and thus to the outside world—were still operating. Working late into the night by candlelight, the correspondents took turns punching out their copy on the Telex machine behind the mahogany reception desk in the main lobby. While they worked, Zvi Avrami, the burly, Rumanian-

born hotel manager who never tired of telling stories about his old Irgun days, passed around free cognac.

On the fifth day of the war, NBC's Dave Weber and the Los Angeles *Times's* Bob Toth narrowly escaped injury when a Jordanian shell smashed into the southern wing of the hotel but failed to explode. In another part of the building, the New York *Times's* Jim Feron and *Newsweek's* Michael Elkins completed an impromptu interview with Jerusalem's indefatigable mayor, Teddy Kollek, who had stopped off at the King David on one of his inspection tours of the city. The interview ended abruptly when Kollek learned that the Kiryat Yovel immigrant housing section on the road to Ein Karem had been badly hit. He raced off to inspect the damage. And as Feron and Elkins watched in horror, a Jordanian mortar scored a direct hit on Kollek's blue bullet-ridden Studebaker Lark, scattering pieces of flesh and metal onto the YMCA lawn across the street.

Kollek's death had a grim irony to it. In the tense weeks before the outbreak of war, no one in the Israeli High Command seriously believed that Jordan's King Hussein would turn Jerusalem—the City of Peace—into a battlefield. At most, the Jordanians were expected to fire a few artillery rounds just to demonstrate whose side they were on. When Colonel Mordechai (Motta) Gur, the thirty-seven-year-old commander of a reserve paratroop brigade, drove to Jerusalem to look over the terrain “just in case,” he was practically laughed out of town by his superiors. “Don't waste your time, Motta,” one senior staff officer advised him. “No one is worrying about Jerusalem. Study Sinai.”

These complacent calculations about Jerusalem were among the first casualties of the war. On the morning of June 5, Jordan's British-trained Arab Legion began a round-the-clock bombardment of Israeli fortifications in the New City. Artillery observers called in strikes against the long string of Israeli border strongpoints, including the sandbagged observation tower on the roof of the Church of the Dormition on Mount Zion. Jordan's British-made Hunter Hawk jets poured a steady stream of rocket fire onto Israeli military installations. And late into the night, as a silver-edged one-third moon rose over Mount Scopus,

Jordanian guns and planes continued to soften up the Israeli positions, some of which were no farther than across the street.

By Tuesday, with a Jordanian column sitting athwart the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway and Jerusalem itself under continuous and heavy fire, it seemed abundantly clear that Hussein had more in mind than merely demonstrating his loyalty to the Arab cause. Accordingly, Gur's brigade of "red berets," which had been earmarked during the first hours of the war for a drop in the Sinai, was sent to reinforce Narkis' badly outnumbered Jerusalem garrison. (The brigade itself was bussed to Jerusalem at night over winding back service roads. Its heavy equipment, sent by truck the next day, was caught in the open by Jordanian jets and destroyed. Thus Gur and his veteran paratroopers were thrown into the battle for Jerusalem armed with little more than their Uzzi submachine guns.)

The news of Gur's arrival (the destruction of his equipment was not mentioned) greatly heartened the tens of thousands of people of Jerusalem in the improvised shelters throughout the city. By Wednesday, after three days of underground living, most people felt more bored than scared. Even the voice of Shuli Nathan* was beginning to get on everyone's nerves. But Kol Israel's hourly news, especially General Haim Herzog's analysis of the military situation, still received undivided attention. Often the program inadvertently provided an ironic twist to the war news. At one point, for example, Kol Israel broadcast, without comment, a message from Pope Paul to U Thant. "In the name of Christianity," the Pope said, "we voice the fervent hope that in the unfortunate eventuality—which we firmly trust will never occur—that the situation may worsen, Jerusalem may, because of its peculiar sacred and holy character, be declared an open and inviolable city." Immediately afterward, the radio replayed King Hussein's message to his troops: "Kill the Jews wherever you find them. Kill them with your arms, with your hands, with your nails and teeth."

Inexorably the city of hope was being turned into a city of death. Artillery and mortar shells rained down on Jaffa Road

* An extremely popular female singer whose rendition of a new hit song, "Jerusalem the Golden," was played over and over again on Kol Israel.

and Princess Mary Street. In Mea Shearim and Yemin Moshe, scores of the city's old stone buildings collapsed under the constant barrage, burying hundreds of people in the rubble. Border neighborhoods like Abu Tor and Musrara were virtually obliterated. Others, like Katamon and Bayit Ve'gan, which were out of Arab artillery range, came under heavy air attacks. In the Kiryat Yovel section of the city, a direct hit all but leveled the Agron Primary School, killing forty-two children who had been living there since the shelling began.

The two major hospitals, Bikur Holim on Straus Street and Shaarei Zedek on Jaffa Road, were almost completely destroyed. And Hadassah Medical Center, on the heights above Ein Karem (the birthplace of John the Baptist), was heavily hit. Dan Ben-Dor, the architect who designed the hospital synagogue that housed the world-famous Chagall windows, tried desperately to save that art treasure. But he managed to cut only three of the stained-glass windows free before the nine others were shattered. (The loss upset Ben-Dor more than Marc Chagall, who cabled from France: "I am not worried about the windows, only about the safety of Israel. Let Israel be safe and I will make you better windows.")

Emergency hospital facilities were quickly set up all over the city to cope with the situation. In the King David Hotel, beds were carted downstairs to La Regence, the heavily sandbagged basement grill room (where Irgun terrorists placed their bombs when they blew up the hotel wing in 1947). The fortresslike National Library at the center of Hebrew University—along with the Beit Elisheva community center in the Katamon section and the thick-walled Jewish Agency Building—were also converted into hospitals. Before long, the newly improvised wards began to overflow with wounded and dead. By midweek, the hospitals had run out of beds, and the injured had to be placed on blankets in corridors. At first glance, the only way visitors could tell the living from the dead was that the dead had handkerchiefs over their faces.

As the toll in human life mounted, the city itself also began to die. A number of Jerusalem's most precious possessions were

destroyed in the continuous bombardment. At the new Israel Museum, the domelike Shrine of the Book containing the Dead Sea Scrolls came under fire and was quickly demolished. Though the Isaiah Scroll (the most famous of the seven Dead Sea Scrolls) had been mechanically lowered into a subterranean shelter at the first hint of trouble, two of the others—which had no such device built into their cases—were lost before frantic museum officials could get them to safety. Works by Moore, Lipschitz and Epstein in the Billy Rose Art Garden, near the museum, were reduced to debris. Countless Torah scrolls and other religious treasures were destroyed as synagogues and religious institutions throughout the city—including Heikhal Shlomo, the seat of Israel's chief rabbinate—went up in flames. The ornate, century-old Russian Cathedral, the brown-domed Ethiopian Place of Heaven Church and the Scottish Church of St. Andrew's were equally battered. On Memorial Hill, in the western part of the city, the archives recording the fate of the six million Jews who perished in the Nazi holocaust were destroyed in a rocket attack. Beit Ha'am (House of the People), where Adolf Eichmann was tried, was partially demolished. Even the Biblical Zoo, which housed all the animals mentioned in the Bible, was wrecked. The animals that survived the attack were shot by the Israelis, who could not risk letting them run free.

On the morning of the fourth day, after more than a thousand tons of explosives had been used against the city, the Jordanians finally launched their all-out ground assault. Moving behind Sherman and Patton tanks, Hussein's Legionnaires tried to break through at a number of places—at the UNRWA depot in the north, at the Mandelbaum Gate, at Government House in the south, and at Abu Tor near Mount Zion. For the first hundred yards, Narkis' soldiers and Gur's paratroopers put up a desperate defense, making the Jordanians pay in blood for every inch of conquered territory.

But three days of constant shelling had taken a heavy toll. Inevitably Jordanian probes found the Israeli weak spots and plunged on through. By noon, all the initial thrust except the

one at the UNRWA depot in the north had made substantial headway. And the Jordanians were throwing fresh troops and tanks into the breaches.

With Jordanian troops steadily enlarging their toeholds, Narkis sent a message to Premier Eshkol advising him that he could no longer guarantee to hold the city. Eshkol immediately called the Cabinet into emergency session. Everyone attended except Dayan, who was at Tel Aviv army headquarters; Eban, who was in New York; and Minister of Police Eliahu Sasson, who had been killed in one of the first air raids.

“I have decided,” Eshkol said, “to implement a contingency plan dividing the state into two separate military commands—Judaea in the north, under Rabin, and Israel in the south, under Dayan. Both commanders have agreed that under the military circumstances, the division is necessary. In addition, I have also reluctantly decided to ask the Cabinet to evacuate Jerusalem and accompany me south. Since our original emergency security bunker at Dimona has been destroyed, I think our best bet is Sde Boker.”

Eshkol, on the edge of exhaustion, waved aside protests that welled up in the room. “You can consider that an order,” he snapped. “Right now, Israel needs live ministers, not dead heroes.”

An hour later, just as another Jordanian air raid ended, a convoy of armored cars carrying Eshkol and most members of the Cabinet sped westward along the Ramat Raziel road, then cut off into narrow security roads carved into the Judaeian hills and headed south toward Sde Boker—the Negev *kibbutz* and the home of David Ben-Gurion.

As things turned out, the Cabinet left just in time. Soon after the convoy cleared the Judaeian hills, the Jordanian ring around the city snapped shut. One Jordanian column, reinforced by Egyptian commandos, pushed across the border near the *kibbutz* of Maaleh Hahamisha and descended on the Arab town of Abu Gosh just outside Jerusalem. The Arabs of Abu Gosh had sided with the Israelis in the 1948 war and had remained loyal since. They knew they would be singled out for special attention by the invaders. In a massive tank assault, the Jordan-

ians captured the Benedictine Monastery and the two *kibbutzim* on the hills overlooking the town. Then for four solid hours they shelled the helpless town itself. After that, Abu Gosh ceased to exist. But a few dozens of its residents still survived, most of them wounded and moaning for help. For each of them there was a bullet from the rifle of an Egyptian commando. The slaughter, when it was over, left not a man, woman or child in Abu Gosh alive.

While a pall settled on Abu Gosh, the Egyptian column moved on to the Israeli settlement of Motza and gave it the same treatment. Then with Motza out of the way, the Jordanians moved on Jerusalem through the back door—from the west.

By the morning of the fifth day, Jordanian units were threatening on a dozen fronts. Suddenly the Jews of the city abandoned the relative safety of their shelters to join the regular troops. Yeshiva students, their side curls flying, threw up crude barricades in the narrow, ghettolike streets of Mea Shearim and stood their ground until Jordanian tanks, firing at point-blank range, reduced the roadblocks to rubble. University students, who for one reason or another had not been called to active service, turned Hebrew University into a fortress. Hundreds of soldiers who had been wounded in the bombardment left the makeshift hospital wards, begged or stole a rifle and returned to the fight.

From the boxlike immigrant housing projects of Sanhedria in the north of Jerusalem to the gardened villas of Talpiot in the south, civilians plunged into the battle to stem the invaders. In the Talbieh district of the Holy City, NBC-News correspondent Alvin Rosenfeld recorded an on-the-spot report.*

ROSENFELD: As you can hear in the background, there's been heavy fighting in Talbieh since early this morning. Jordanian positions atop the Old City walls to the east have been bombarding the area since midday Monday. Jordanian units, which broke through into the Israeli sector at Abu Tor, have been advancing house by house since dawn. By now, there's hardly a window left

* Rosenfeld's tape later provided the final broadcast from Israeli-held Jerusalem.

unshattered or a building unpockmarked by bullets in all of this once-quiet neighborhood of modern apartments and elegant old Arab villas.

I'm standing in the rubble-strewn garden of the Belgian Consulate, crouched to the side of what was once a grass-covered circle called Kikar Salamei—Salamei Square. Now it's a veritable citizens' fortress—an almost unbelievable testimony to the fight the people of Jerusalem are putting up.

At about seven A.M., a platoon of bedraggled Israeli troops in grimy camouflage uniforms pulled into the square and set up a defensive position. Suddenly—and completely spontaneously—people from all over the neighborhood started leaving their shelters, converged on the square and for the past three hours have been helping the troops build a massive chain of barricades all around the perimeter. Others have set up little sand-bagged positions on their own apartment terraces.

Down here, there must be two hundred, three hundred people by now. I can see the man who runs the grocery near the square. There's a well-known Jerusalem lawyer. Housewives in cotton summer dresses, kids in shorts and sandals. It's incredible! Machine-gun fire has been whizzing up these streets steadily. Yet these people have managed to drag in the hulks of shelled cars. They've piled on trees, wrought-iron fencing, trash cans—anything they can lay their hands on. Others have brought sandbags from their own shelters and kitchen tables from their apartments. Two men in skullcaps even carted over a green velvet sofa and gently laid it on top of the barricade. To the side here, about forty people have set up an assembly line, and they're passing building stones and cement blocks from a nearby construction site.

The main barricade now stands about eight feet high. It's facing Talbieh's steep Jabotinsky Street hill—the obvious route the Jordanians will take when they launch their final assault on Talbieh.

The Israelis have a slight advantage; they're at the top of the hill and the Jordanians will have to come up from the bottom. But the odds are still against these Israeli defenders.

There aren't even many weapons to go around. Those without

guns have armed themselves from an unbelievable arsenal—crowbars, garden rakes, even just wooden sticks. The soldiers have opened some crates of grenades and have been passing them around to the people behind the barricades. A young curly-haired sergeant, with a band of machine-gun bullets around his neck and a bloodstained bandage around his head, has been showing them how to use them. I can see a plumpish, middle-aged lady, maybe fifty, fifty-five—she's in a green dress, the kind she might wear to go shopping in, and she's holding a grenade in her fist—just holding it tight and sitting on the grass with her back to the barricade, waiting. They're tense, these people, but there's no panic. It's almost like a—

Wait! A man in a third-floor apartment is signaling. Yes . . . there they are . . . I can see them. There are three, no, five Jordanian Patton tanks at the bottom of the hill now. They've just pulled in from King George Avenue, and they're snailing a path up the hill toward this barricade.

About half a dozen troop carriers behind them . . . the Arab troops have now jumped off. They're fanning out . . . and the Israelis have opened fire . . . one of their mortars, one mortar has fallen short . . . a tremendous explosion . . . now another . . . the second has hit. It's hit a tank, and a Jordanian tank is aflame now . . . the others pulling around it. They've revved up their motors, and they're pulling toward the barricade. They must be two hundred yards away now . . . tremendous flames from the burning tank . . . and the Israelis have opened up with everything they have . . . people here slumped along the barricades, firing over the top . . . other Israelis tossing down grenades and Molotov cocktails from apartment buildings down the hill. The street's a sheet of flames. Another Jordanian tank hit . . . but now four more still coming! They've blasted the side of an apartment building, and an Israeli—a kid or a man, I can't tell—an Israeli has fallen over the side of a building. The tanks are closer now—you can even make out the numbers on them—but no one here is pulling back. And now a shell, a Jordanian shell has just smashed down the middle of the main barricade! Oh, this is horrible! Move away! Move away please! A lady here badly hurt, and there are

people hurt and bleeding and screaming all around me . . . Get down there! . . . Oh, no! Another tank has pulled in from the side, from Balfour Street. It's about forty feet from us. And now a man, a man has scrambled over the side of the barricade and he's running right up to the tank with a grenade in his hand, and he's—oh, God! Oh, it's plowing right over him, the tank's gone right over him! . . . Oh, for God's sake, for God's sake almighty. . . .

Slowly the strength of Jordanian armor, supported by artillery and aerial rocket fire, forced back the defenders—soldiers and citizens alike. By late afternoon, as the Sabbath fell on Jerusalem, Jordanian tanks reached the center of the city. Though small Israeli units and individual snipers continued to harass the Arabs for days (especially at Hebrew University), the Jordanian commander sent a victory cable to King Hussein. "I have the honor to report," he said, "that the entire Holy City is now part of the Hashimite Kingdom."

In the long, mournful silence that followed the capture of Jerusalem, Naomi Vardi remained curled up on her bed, chain-smoking Lido cigarettes and worrying about her parents. She had said good-bye to her mother and father just before the Arabs launched their final assault on the city, and her parting words had been: "When this is over, don't budge. I'll come to you." Now that the fighting was over, Naomi was frightened that her aging parents would ignore her advice and, in their concern over her, venture out into the streets. She was just as frightened by the thought of venturing out herself.

Gathering her courage, she got up from the bed and walked to the window. Outside, Ben Maimon Street was dark and deserted. She slipped on a pair of white sandals and ran down the stairs. As soon as she emerged from the safety of her thick-walled apartment house, she realized that she had made a dreadful mistake.

Picking their way past the smoking wreckage of automobiles and the grotesque forms of corpses, seven Arab soldiers were coming toward her. Naomi, a shapely, twenty-one-year-old

sabra, put her hand to her mouth and fought back an almost overpowering urge to turn and run. That, she reasoned, would only invite a bullet in her back. She examined the soldiers closely as they approached. They did not seem to be Jordanians, at least not from the uniforms they were wearing. They were probably Iraqis. Each of them had stuffed his pockets and his knapsack with loot—silk scarves, transistor radios, electric shavers.

With a false calm that surprised even her, Naomi took out her wallet, produced her Israeli identity booklet and handed it to the lead soldier in the patrol, a short, swarthy man with a low hairline that almost reached down to his eyebrows. She pointed to her photograph and signature on the inside page, then motioned in the direction she wanted to go. For a long moment, the Arab peered at the light blue booklet, and Naomi thought that he was somehow impressed by its appearance of authority. But then he looked at Naomi and flashed a broad smile that bared the black cavities in his front teeth.

"Hiya bitjannin," he said to the others.

They broke into raucous laughter. Without thinking, Naomi tried to bolt through the circle of armed men. One of the soldiers put out his leg and tripped her. Two others caught her arms as she struggled to get up and flung her back to the ground. Then they began stripping off her clothes, slowly and carefully so as not to tear them. As each item was unfastened and waved aloft like some captured battle flag, it produced a round of coarse laughter. Gradually Naomi's underclothing disappeared in the pockets and knapsacks of her tormentors. Pinned stark naked to the street by the strong hands of six men, Naomi watched in terror as the swarthy soldier began to unfasten his web belt. Beyond desperation, she opened her mouth and let out a shrill scream that echoed through the empty streets of Rehavia.

Saturday, June Tenth

The road to Tel Aviv was jammed with refugees. Behind them, the thunder of Egyptian artillery drew closer. The sound frightened two-year-old Eli Nissim, and he began to cry. His mother, Tova, rolled up the window of their small Volkswagen.

“Can’t you go any faster?” she asked her husband.

“What kind of a stupid question is that?” Meir Nissim said testily. “What do you want me to do, run them over? There are thousands of people in front of us.”

Throughout the night, while darkness afforded some degree of safety from Egyptian planes, tens of thousands of Jews, the sick and the wounded, the lame and the healthy, trudged toward Tel Aviv. They carried with them their belongings—clothing, food, furniture, family china, even in one case a large brass Russian samovar. Every so often, the mass of refugees had to scurry off the road as a truckload of Israeli soldiers sped south.

It was almost dawn on the Sabbath, the sixth day of the war, when Meir brought his Volkswagen to a stop in front of an apartment house near the Carmel Market in Tel Aviv.

“I don’t know why we came here,” Meir said, climbing out. “We should have gone to one of the refugee centers like everybody else.”

“Don’t take the war out on me,” Tova said. “My sister and her husband have plenty of room.”

Upstairs, Meir rang the bell on 4-B over and over, but nobody answered.

“I told you we should have gone to the refugee center,” he

said, and banged on the door with his fist. Eli burst into tears again.

“Stop working yourself into a state,” Tova said. “They’re probably in the basement shelter.”

At precisely that moment, the Arabs launched their final attack on Tel Aviv with an all-out artillery barrage. As the shells began exploding close by, the Nissims raced down the stairs to the basement. There they found Tova’s sister and brother-in-law huddled—along with sixty-seven other tenants—on mattresses and blankets. For the rest of the day, countless earth-shaking concussions rocked the building and covered everything with a fine layer of plaster dust. At midday the electricity went out, and the frightened Jews lit candles. At 2:10, a sewer line burst and flooded the basement with two inches of foul-smelling slime. At 3:40 a hysterical woman ran in from the street screaming that she had seen American ships just off the coast of Tel Aviv. (In fact, they were Egyptian destroyers, and they were shelling the city.) By early evening, the explosions outside had become less frequent. Now, however, the people in the basement could hear the clank of tank treads, the crack of rifles and machine guns, and an occasional yell in Arabic. Then these sounds passed, too, and for the next three hours there was dead silence.

The Jews sat where they were, staring at the basement door, expecting to see an Arab walk through at any moment. But when the enemy did not come, they began to talk in whispers.

“Perhaps someone should go out and surrender.”

“Are you crazy?”

“My foot’s gone to sleep.”

“I can’t stand this smell anymore. Do something.”

“Maybe one of the men can go up on the roof and take a look.”

“Yes, someone should go up and take a look.”

For reasons he himself did not understand, Meir Nissim volunteered. Pausing every few steps to listen, he made his way up the stairs to the roof. He filled his lungs with the fresh night air and looked around. Before him, Tel Aviv—a city built by the Jews on a sand dune fifty-six years earlier—unfolded in a

panorama of destruction. Flames leaped into the sky, illuminating swirling clouds of smoke. Down the block, the burned-out shell of the old Tel Aviv City Hall stood silhouetted against the distant fires. In the other direction, he could make out a line of tanks parked in front of stores that had not been destroyed. Soldiers were looting the stores and passing the booty, hand to hand, down the hatches of the tanks.

Meir went back down to the basement.

“Well?”

“How is it?”

“What’s going on?”

Meir Nissim stood on the top of the basement stairs. He could find no words to describe what he had seen.

The *hamsin*, a stale, infernolike desert wind that sweeps in from the Dead Sea, had turned the Negev into a vast oven. Just outside the small mining town of Mitzpeh Ramon, on the towering cliffs overlooking the desolate moonscape of the Ramon Crater, Brigadier General Avraham Yoffe mopped his brow with a water-soaked handkerchief and then wrung it out. He watched the drops of water soak into the wooden floorboards of his headquarters and wondered vaguely if the Egyptians were suffering from the heat as much as the Israelis.

Even now, Yoffe could only marvel at the chain of events that had brought him to the crater. On Wednesday, Brigadier General Yeshayahou Gavish had ordered his entire southern command to pull back toward Beersheba. But before Yoffe could position a rear guard and begin the retreat, the Egyptians dropped a battalion of paratroopers between him and Beer-sheba. Rather than stop to fight his way through a series of road-blocks—a move that would have left his armored units stretched out along the desert roads at the mercy of Egyptian jets—Yoffe decided to turn south. Acting on his own initiative, he made a dash for the Ramon Crater.

As the peacetime director of Israel’s national parks, the heavyset Yoffe knew the land better than most *sabras*. It did not take him long to grasp the tactical advantages of his position. Defending against an attack from the south presented

no problem at all. The single asphalt road from Eilat to Beer-sheba came straight across the flat twenty-two-mile-wide bed of the crater and then wound up the side of the steep heights in a series of sharp S curves. One Israeli mortar squad on the rim of the crater could halt a battalion of tanks. The rugged foothills in the north were also relatively easy to defend. Except for the main road or the wadis, the foothills were practically impassable to armor.

As hundreds of soldiers from divisions Tal and Sharon (the two other divisions that had been defending the southern border against the Egyptians) straggled to the safety of the crater, Yoffe organized his defenses. He ordered his few remaining tanks (many of them down to their last drops of fuel) into positions commanding the approaches from the north. The troops, burrowed into folds of the foothills or concealed in caves around these strongpoints, found themselves protected—for the first time since the outbreak of the war—from Egyptian air attacks.

While Yoffe was still digging in, he deployed elements of the first brigade, under the command of Colonel Ishahar Shadmi (the manager of Israel's only skyscraper, the Shalom Tower, which had been partially demolished in one of the early air raids on Tel Aviv), down into the crater bed. Shadmi hid his men and jeeps in a wadi near the wells at Ein Geled. Late at night, Shadmi attacked Task Force Shazali, which had moved up from Eilat with more than 100 tanks and bivouacked in the bed of the crater. Firing bazookas and lobbing grenades from speeding jeeps, Shadmi's men raced past the Egyptian perimeter and ripped into the tank park, damaging a third of the tanks before the Egyptians knew what had happened.

Shadmi's ambush, in the early hours of Friday morning, was not the only good news Yoffe could radio back. The next day his chief of staff, Colonel "Bren" Adan, forty, a small, rugged tank commander who relished nothing better than a head-on fight (Adan had captured Abu Agueila in 1948 and again in 1956), put together a task force and wiped out an Egyptian paratroop unit that landed near the town of Mitzpeh Ramon itself in an attempt to occupy the rim of the crater.

On Saturday, with more and more Israeli stragglers filling out the Israeli lines, Yoffe radioed Gavish that he had turned the

crater into a sort of national redoubt. Gavish, still seething because Yoffe had failed to retreat to Beersheba as ordered, was unimpressed. "My congratulations," he murmured into the radio telephone. "We may have lost Tel Aviv, but you've saved the Ramon Crater."

The entrance hall and tiny kitchen of David Ben-Gurion's green wooden bungalow in the Negev settlement of Sde Boker (Fields of the Herdsman) looked like an army mess. Sitting atop three large army-issue field stoves were the *kibbutz's* pots and pans and soup tureens, all brimming with food Mrs. Paula Ben-Gurion and two other women had prepared. In the absence of her husband, who had been unable to fly back from Paris now that all of Israel's airports were closed, Paula Ben-Gurion had voluntarily taken charge of the feeding and care of the Israeli government—or what was left of it.

Filling a stainless steel pitcher with freshly brewed tea, Paula handed it to Sima Attias, a tall, buxom, twenty-year-old corporal who had arrived only a few hours before from southern command headquarters in Beersheba. Sima closed the screen door of the air-conditioned bungalow and crossed the neat lawn to a mound of flowers and cactus a few steps away. There she opened a camouflaged door and stepped down a flight of cement steps into Ben-Gurion's personal bunker. With only one kerosene lamp providing light, Sima felt her way along the cool corrugated metal walls of the narrow bunker to another door. She knocked, and someone yelled, "Come!"

It was like entering another world. The room, small and crowded, was brightly lit and humming with activity. In one corner there was a radio transmitter and a simple iron cot. Information Minister Israel Galili leaned over the shoulders of the female radio operator, watching as she decoded a message.

"Listen to this," Galili said to everyone in the room. "Lipschitz and his *hevra* [gang] were successful at Alexandria." *

* Shortly after the war began, six Israeli frogmen, commanded by Major Eitan Lipschitz, a thirty-three-year-old *sabra*, slipped out of an Israeli submarine, penetrated Alexandria Harbor and blew up three Egyptian capital ships. Unable to rendezvous with their submarine, the *Tannin* (Crocodile), the six Israelis swam to shore and were captured the next morning by Arab fishermen and turned over to the Egyptian Security Police.

A few seconds later, Galili was waving another piece of paper. "The ironies of war, eh? Yesterday we received a call from Tel Aviv asking permission to burn all their money before it falls into the hands of the Arabs. Now the army paymaster in Haifa wants permission to distribute all his funds to the troops before the city is overrun. I guess it pays to defend Haifa more than Tel Aviv."

Sima Attias, still holding the pitcher at the entrance of the room, began to laugh at Galili's quip. Then she guiltily put a hand over her mouth.

"Please put the tea on the table," Adi Yaffe, the Prime Minister's aide, told her.

Sima placed the pitcher in front of Levi Eshkol, who was sitting with his chin resting on both his hands.

"Tell them to burn the money," Eshkol said, almost in a whisper.

"Pardon me?" Sima Attias said, thinking that the Prime Minister had spoken to her.

Absentmindedly Eshkol smiled at the girl and motioned her to sit down in one of the chairs.

"I said," Eshkol repeated, turning toward Israel Galili, "tell them to burn all the money. It's no good to us anymore."

Galili scribbled the order and passed it to the radio operator. Within minutes, the answer came back. This time, Galili did not say a word. Instead, he wrote three words, "Tel Aviv *nihne'ah* [Tel Aviv has surrendered]," on a scrap of paper and passed it around the room—from Eshkol to Yaffe to Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir to Interior Minister Moshe-Haim Shapiro to Religious Affairs Minister Zerah Warhaftig to Education Minister Zalman Aranne to Justice Minister Yaakov Shapiro and finally to Aryeh Levavi, the director general of the Foreign Ministry.

"Well," Zerah Warhaftig said, "I suppose they did the right thing—surrendering, I mean."

"I thought," Zalman Aranne said, "they were going to hold out another day."

"With what?" Adi Yaffe demanded to know. "With the bank notes we told them to burn?"

Eshkol removed his eyeglasses and rubbed the bridge of his nose. He took a handkerchief from a pocket and cleaned his glasses, then put them back on. For the first time, he realized that Corporal Sima Attias was sitting at his table, watching and listening in wide-eyed astonishment. He was going to order her out of the room but decided that her presence could not possibly make any difference.

“How old are you?” Eshkol asked her.

“Twenty,” Sima replied.

“A year older than our country,” he said. “Still very young. Very young. But”—and here Eshkol shrugged and blew his nose loudly.

Just then, the radio operator tuned in a BBC broadcast. Geoffrey Kemp, a Middle East specialist at Britain’s Institute of Strategic Studies, was discussing the outcome of the latest United Nations Security Council meeting. As the members of the Israeli government crowded around the radio set, Kemp analyzed the meaning of the day’s Security Council action.

“And so,” Kemp said, “for the third time in less than a week, the United Nations have gone on record as favoring an immediate cease-fire in the Middle East. Once again Mr. Eban has accepted, on behalf of the Israeli government, and asked that the resolution take force immediately. However, Mr. El Kony, speaking for the Arab delegation, has charged that Israeli Army units are continuing their military operations unabated. Mr. El Kony made it quite clear that until the Israelis lay down their arms, the Arab forces are not prepared to recognize the cease-fire unilaterally. It is apparent, therefore, that the Arabs—”

Suddenly the broadcast was interrupted by loud crackling static. The radio operator twisted the dials on her receiver in an attempt to find the lost signal, but to no avail.

“Well, it’s obvious what they’re up to,” Justice Minister Yaakov Shapiro said. “They’re going to stall on the cease-fire until it’s all over.”

“It doesn’t make much difference anyway,” Israel Galili said. “What good is a cease-fire when a man’s standing inside your house with a gun in his hand?”

While the ministers discussed the now wholly academic issue of obtaining a meaningful cease-fire, a coded cable was received from Yigal Allon, the forceful Minister of Labor, who had successfully crossed the Arab lines and reached Judaea headquarters in Haifa. The radio operator was unfamiliar with the special Prime Minister's code used by Allon. Consulting her loose-leaf code book, she laboriously broke the sentences down word by word, and as she scribbled the words in Hebrew, Israel Galili read them aloud.

"Syrian — forces — at — gates — of — Haifa," Galili read. "We — putting — up — fierce — resistance — but — fear — it — will — be — only — matter — of — hours — before — they — are — upon — us — Syrian — and — Iraqi — units — have — begun — to — move — down — on — city — from — Carmel — Other — Syrian — units — moving — in — from — around — bay — area — Appreciate — urgent — instructions — whether — to — implement — *mikre hakol* [fight to the death] — Allon."

There was a moment of stunned silence.

"*Mikre hakol*," Eshkol said with a heavy sigh. "I don't know."

"You can still order him to surrender," Adi Yaffe said.

"I can order him to stand on his head, too," Eshkol said, "but he doesn't have to listen. I don't know what makes sense anymore." Eshkol glanced across the table at Sima Attias. The girl looked as though she was about to burst into tears. The anguished expression on her young face made Eshkol feel that he had to make a decision quickly, if only to prove to the girl that the situation had not passed completely beyond control. "All right," he said, "first let me speak to Moshe."

Swiftly the radio operator put in a call to Moshe Dayan, who had joined General Yoffe at the Ramon Crater.

"Moshe, this is *Ma'amad*," Eshkol said. (*Ma'amad*, the Hebrew word for "stand," was the code name of the government bunker at Sde Boker.) "We have just received news from Judaea. They estimate they can hold out only a few hours longer. We are anxious to know what your prospects are."

"We can hold out here as long as our ammunition holds out,"

Dayan said. "Right now they are just probing our defenses. I don't think they plan to attack us in strength. I suspect they'll just let us wilt on the vine. Just a second." Dayan's transmitter clicked off for an instant, then came back again. "Yoffe tells me their main force—the one that was threatening us from the north—is moving toward your area. They've definitely bypassed us."

"Listen, Moshe," Eshkol said, "Judaea is calling for *mikre hakol*."

There was a long pause. Then Eshkol added: "Did you hear me? *Mikre hakol*. What do you think?"

Another pause. "What can I think?" Dayan said. "Nobody can tell Judaea what to do now. Every man is his own judge."

"Yes, I agree," Eshkol said heavily. "I will try and call you again in a few hours. *Shalom*, Moshe. *Shalom*."

"*Shalom*."

There was another hushed silence in the bunker, broken only by the mournful sounds of Warhaftig and Shapiro reciting *tehilim*, Hebrew psalms. Eshkol put his arm around Yaffe's shoulder and led him to a corner of the bunker.

"I am going to draft a message to the people," Eshkol said. "Can this transmitter reach the whole country?"

The squat, mustachioed Yaffe thought for a moment. "We'll beam it in on the old Kol Israel wavelength," he said, "and we'll keep on repeating it as long as we can."

"Good."

Eshkol sat down at the table and looked once again at the terrified figure of Sima Attias. Then, with a stubby pencil, he began writing his message on a sheet of paper. Ten minutes later, he had finished. He passed the message around the room. As each Cabinet minister read it and nodded his approval, the radio operator announced:

"Citizens of Israel, please stay tuned to this wavelength for an important message from the Prime Minister. Citizens of Israel, please stay . . ."

Eshkol moved toward the transmitter, his aged bulldog face set in an expression of grim resignation.

“Is it ready?” he asked.

“Yes, sir.”

Israel Galili took the microphone from the radio operator, said, “Ladies and gentlemen, the Prime Minister,” and then placed the microphone in front of Eshkol.

“Citizens of Israel,” Eshkol began. “Friends and comrades. I speak to you tonight with a heavy heart. Once again, the sons of Amelik have descended upon us. All of us, our valiant troops, our people in the cities and our people in the settlements, have fought against overwhelming odds with a bravery that befits the descendants of the Maccabees and the Zealots of Massada. But we have fought an aggressor whose savage attack was launched with the weight of a massive military machine and with overpowering numerical force. We have fought an aggressor who had the direct support of a mighty world power. And we have fought without the aid and help of those whom we had trusted and upon whom we had depended as friends. For the present, our situation is grim. Jerusalem, our crown, has fallen. Tel Aviv, our pioneer city, has succumbed. And even as I speak to you, the valiant people of Haifa are waging an eleventh-hour struggle to stem the invader. On every front, despite all our reversals, we continue to resist with that selfsame determination that has enabled us to survive the onslaughts of four thousand years of aggression.

“But, my friends, we must be realistic. The government has met and reached certain conclusions. Considering the circumstances, we declare that henceforth all decisions pertaining to the defense of the nation shall be made by local commanders, who are best able to judge the conditions in their areas. Where local commanders deem it suitable, they are hereby authorized to enter into negotiations with the enemy. We call on everyone to refrain from panic, to work now to maintain life in the same cooperative spirit that has built our state.” Here Eshkol’s voice faltered. “Fighters for Israel’s freedom,” he continued, “may the Rock of Israel go with you, may the words of our sages guide us. The Guardian of Israel will not falter or rest. My friends, *hizku ve’imtzu*. Be strong and of good courage.”

Tears were in Eshkol's eyes. Sima Attias wept quietly. And as the tape recording that had been made of his speech was repeated over the transmitter, the dull thump of advancing Egyptian artillery could be heard in the bunker at Sde Boker.

Sunday, June Eleventh

King Hussein had checked and double-checked every detail of the security arrangements himself. But he was still uneasy. The idea of holding an Arab summit meeting on Jordanian soil made him nervous. If Ahmed Shukairy, the pudgy, pugnacious chief of the Palestine Liberation Organization, so much as stubbed a toe, Hussein knew that he personally would be held responsible. And, Allah forbid, if something happened to one of the other Arab leaders, that could conceivably cost Hussein his Hashimite throne—and his life.

Yet Hussein was a man who harbored few illusions, and he had to admit that playing host to the potentates of the Arab world appealed to his vanity. Indeed, he had taken a keen delight in greeting them as they arrived, one by one, earlier in the morning. Now, waiting for the last guest, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Hussein could barely conceal a smug smile. For once, he reflected, Nasser was coming to *him*—a fact that would not be lost on either the young king's many domestic enemies or the watchful world.

Hussein's private secretary, Zeid Rifai, walked up to the young monarch and told him that the plane carrying Nasser and his party would touch down in three minutes. Hussein cast a quick look around. Kalandiya Airfield, atop the Judaeen hills just north of Jerusalem, had been hastily festooned with bright flags and pennants. The red carpet used during Pope Paul's visit to the Holy Land in 1964 had been traced to a store-room, dusted off and stretched out on the coal-colored tarmac. An honor guard of Bedouin Legionnaires, fairly gleaming in red and white *kaffiyas*, was drawn up along one side of the car-

pet. (Hussein originally had planned to have them stand on both sides, but he ordered a last-minute change when Rifai pointed out that it would be almost impossible to get good photographs of the diminutive king greeting Nasser with a line of legionnaires in the way.)

Behind Hussein and to his right stood the other Arab leaders: Syrian President Nureddin Atassi and Major General Salah Jadid, Syria's mysterious strongman; Lebanese President Charles Helou and his Premier, Rashid Karami (the Lebanese Army commander, General Emile Bustani, who balked at helping the Syrians during the first stage of the war, had been left behind because of objections from Damascus); Iraq's slim, tough President, Abdel Rahman Aref; and off to one side, practically dancing a jig for joy, Ahmed Shukairy.

Hussein looked back toward the end of the runway. Droning in from the east above the folds of the rolling, rock-strewn hills, came Nasser's silver Illushen-18. Hussein, a flier himself (his silver pilot's wings sparkled proudly on the left breast of his khaki uniform), watched the landing with the eye of a professional. The Egyptian pilot, he noted, was coming in a bit high and fast, but he compensated quickly and made a smooth landing.

Nasser's plane taxied to a spot yards away from the end of the red carpet. Moments later, the Egyptian leader, looming larger than his six feet, two inches in the cabin doorway, stepped onto the stairs. Crowding behind him came his entourage: Mohammed Hassanein Heykal, the powerful editor of the daily Cairo newspaper *Al Ahram* and one of Nasser's closest confidants; Field Marshal Abdel Hakim Amer, commander of Egypt's armed forces; Vice-Presidents Zakaraya Mohieddin and Aly Sabry; and the courtly Secretary General of the Cairo-based Arab League, Abdel Khalik Hassouna.

For a fleeting instant, Nasser seemed to hesitate. Then, flashing a great toothy smile and carefully keeping his head turned toward the photographers (Nasser disliked his profile), the Egyptian leader strode down the steps toward Hussein. Towering over the young Jordanian monarch, Nasser caught him up in a giant bear hug. Then he greeted the other leaders (newsmen on hand carefully recorded the order: Atassi, Aref, Helou

and Shukairy) while a Jordanian Army band struck up a lethargic Arab march. Finally Nasser stepped up to a battery of microphones. Speaking slowly and with great emotional force, Nasser declared: "For nineteen years, the Arab nation has waited for this moment. Now, with victory in our hands and the Jews at our feet, we can begin to rebuild the foundations of a great civilization. Surely historians a thousand years hence will trace the beginning of the second great flourishing of Islam back to this morning."

Half an hour later, the greetings and speeches out of the way, the Arab leaders boarded four giant helicopters parked at the end of the runway for a firsthand look at the country they had just defeated. Flying at 1,500 feet—high enough to discourage any stray Israeli sniper but low enough to get a detailed view of the countryside—the helicopters headed out over the Judaeen hills, bare at this time of year except for the forests of green saplings planted by the Israelis.

As the Arab leaders pressed their faces against the windows and peered down, an apocalyptic vision of death and destruction unfolded below. The Israeli section of Jerusalem was a shambles. Aside from some sporadic artillery fire directed at diehards holed up in Hebrew University, the city seemed deathly still. Great sections had been reduced to rubble, especially near the border, where the house-to-house fighting had been fiercest. Dozens of fires were still burning all over the city. And long lines of weary Jews wound around the littered streets and empty lots, waiting patiently for rations of water being doled out by volunteers from Magen David Adom, the Israeli Red Star of David.

Outside Jerusalem, the roads were empty except for an occasional Jordanian or Iraqi jeep or truck. The small bands of Israeli refugees that were moving away from the city seemed to prefer the open fields to the open roads—and possible encounters with Arab troops.

It wasn't difficult to see where the fighting had taken place. The Israeli settlement of Motza had been destroyed beyond recognition. And the side of a hill on which Abu Gosh once stood had been transformed into a giant scar.

Bab el Wad, the famous wadi (or pass) that played such an important role during the 1948 siege of Jerusalem, looked like Mitla Pass after the Israelis routed the Egyptians in Sinai in 1956. Scores of Israeli tanks and half-tracks had been caught on the narrow, winding mountain road in the early days of the war as they headed toward Latrun to battle the Jordanian column trying to cut the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway. Now, their burned-out shells clogged the road, turning it into a long graveyard. Some half-tracks and jeeps had been caught trying to claw their way up the almost impassable wooded side of the wadi. Overturned, their gun barrels twisted, their wheels bowed inward, they lay where they had been pinned to the charred earth by a rocket or napalm attack. There were so many wrecked vehicles in the wadi that it was no longer possible, at least from the air, to pick out the dozen or so ruined, rusted trucks that had been left standing since 1948 as a memorial to the soldiers who gave their lives trying to run supplies past the Arab stronghold at Latrun into Jerusalem.

After Bab el Wad came the Nashon crossroad, where the highway forked northwest toward Tel Aviv and south toward the Negev. Here another Israeli column had attempted a stand and been left in charred ruins by the Arab jets. Farther on, the sprawling Israeli Army camp at Tserifin had practically disappeared. In its place there was only napalm-blackened earth. Lod International Airport, a few miles away, had been demolished in the first attack on Monday. The giant hangars, the control tower and the arrival building had been attacked over and over again. Some buildings were still standing, but it was obvious, even from the air, that they were merely burned-out shells. Flying over the battered immigrant town of Or Yehuda, the Arab leaders could make out tiny knots of people rummaging through the wreckage of their homes. As the helicopters drew near, dozens of the Jews raced for cover.

The closer the helicopters came to Tel Aviv, the greater were the scenes of destruction. Charred crossroads stood as mute monuments to Israeli units that had tried to stem the tide in desperate rearguard actions. Egged buses, which had ferried Israel's citizen-soldiers to hastily dug trenches only days before, lay on their sides or backs, gunned down by strafing jets.

Tel Aviv itself was still smoldering; thin vaporous smoke spiraled up from the hundreds of buildings that had been utterly demolished in the saturation bombing raids that preceded the final attack. The American Embassy on Hayarkan Street had been badly damaged. Almost all the windows in the large international hotels next to the Mediterranean had been shattered by explosions, and the Tel Aviv Hilton had been gutted. Even the long white ribbon of sand along the edge of the sea bore the unmistakable marks of war—beached, burned-out boats, bodies of dead Israelis tossed back and forth by the surf, long patches of oil-soaked sand.

The panoramic helicopter tour had a profound impact on the Arab leaders. As they circled over Tel Aviv and headed back toward Jerusalem, Nasser—who had remained speechless while aides pointed out the landmarks below—turned to Hussein and said huskily: “I don’t think I really believed that the Jews had lost until now. By God, it is a thrilling sight.”

By noon the Arab chieftains, already ten minutes behind Hussein’s carefully arranged itinerary, were back in Jerusalem for brief victory services at one of the holiest shrines in all of Islam—the gold-domed Mosque of Omar in the Old City. There, amid the brilliant colored marble mosaics, Nasser, Hussein and the others ceremoniously washed the soles of their feet. Then, kneeling on the soft oriental carpets near the Great Rock, from which the Prophet Mohammed is thought to have ascended to heaven, they were led in prayer by the Mufti of Jerusalem, Abdul Hamid Saiyah, who repeated Mohammed’s words: “Though they gave me the sun in my right hand, and the moon in my left, to turn me from my undertaking, yet would I not pause until I saw the victory of the Lord’s cause, or till I died for it.”

That out of the way, the Arab leaders attended an elaborate banquet at the modern three-story Intercontinental Hotel, atop the Mount of Olives. From the arched hotel windows, the Old City of Jerusalem stretched out in a furling panorama of domed roofs and ancient walls. And by the time they had sipped their last cups of Turkish coffee, the sun had moved low into the skies, casting a gold and pink hue over Jerusalem’s limestone facade. Only then did they adjourn to a nearby con-

ference room to get down to the heart of the matter. Seated around a rectangular table, with Nasser at their head and the City of David at their feet, the victorious Arabs began the delicate task of dividing up the country they had just conquered.

Ahmed Shukairy, looking almost comic in his ill-fitting military uniform, spoke first. He seemed to assume from the start that once the fighting was over, the “liberated homeland” would be turned over, lock, stock and barrel, to the Palestinians—a move that would transform Shukairy into a head of state. Individual Palestinians, he indicated, had already been chosen to take command of every city, town and village in the country. All that remained was to give them the go-ahead signal.

Shukairy made no bones about what he would do with the country once it was in his hands. To begin with, he planned to organize a vast program to deport as many Jews as possible. Only native-born Jews who indicated they would cooperate with the “new order” would be allowed to remain. Units of the Palestine Liberation Army and of El Fatah would form a regular defense force and be given “a free hand to deal with those who resisted the new order.” He spoke of holding war crimes trials for captured Israeli leaders. The *pièce de résistance*, however, was his plan to raise money to rebuild the war-devastated countryside. “Under my program, it would be simple,” Shukairy explained. “Tens of thousands of Jews in America have relatives in Israel. And they will be willing to pay a considerable sum to ensure their safety. We will do what Castro did—only we won’t ask for tractors. We will demand dollars. If they want to see their relatives again, they will have to provide passage to America and pay us a ransom.”

Shukairy’s last suggestion frightened Hussein, who had already begun to worry about how he could get back into Washington’s good graces once the war ended. Most of Jordan’s economic and military aid had come from the United States, and Hussein was anxious not to leave his country isolated abroad and completely dependent at home on the ambitions of Gamal Nasser. Fear of further alienating the Americans (whom Hussein had already begun to woo secretly) was not, however, the only reason why Hussein was opposed to handing over the liber-

ated territories to Shukairy. Hussein naturally wanted to retain as much of the conquered land as possible for himself. He was prepared to demand that Jordan be allowed to keep the city of Jerusalem and the finger of land to the west known as the Jerusalem Corridor. Beyond that, Hussein hoped that he could emerge from the peace parley with one of his country's long-sought-after objectives—a seaport on the Mediterranean. With these thoughts in mind, he spoke up.

“It is premature to talk of handing the country over to the Palestinians,” the king said. “Let us not forget that there is still scattered opposition which requires a military solution. And there are scores of settlements that our armies bypassed in the drive for the main cities which must now be pacified. Clearly we face a formidable mop-up operation.”

“What, then, does our brother suggest?” Nasser asked.

“I only suggest that for the moment each army should administer the territory it now occupies.”

Iraq's Abdel Rahman Aref had his own ideas. Ever since he assumed power in Baghdad following the death of his brother, President Abdel Salem Aref, the younger Aref had ruled very much in the shadow of his brother's reputation. Now, however, he saw an opportunity to score a success in his own right. Accordingly, Aref—who had contributed considerable air support and three brigades to the Arab war effort—had come to Jerusalem intent on getting something for his trouble. But since Iraq had no common border with Israel, this posed a problem.

“I think it would be dangerous,” he said cautiously, “to let things remain as they are until a final settlement is worked out. The Americans and the Russians tried that after World War Two, and they are still occupying the same territory they occupied at the end of the war. No, we must attack the problem immediately. What we need is a five-power commission to administer the country, with the forces of each of the five partners operating under the orders of the commission. Then, if—”

Syria's President Nureddin Atassi, who had little use for Aref (the Iraqi President had a long record of hostility to the Baathist regime in Syria), interrupted. “Naturally, our brother Aref wants a piece of the cake when it is divided. But I agree with

King Hussein; now is not the time to work out this problem. First, we must put the country entirely under control. Then, we will have the time to sit down and work out the future of the land. I, too, am for letting each army administer the area it occupies.”

“Since you hold the Galilee, the most fertile land, that comes as no surprise to us,” Aref said.

“Exactly what does my brother imply?” Atassi demanded.

“Only what is written on my brother’s face—greed,” Aref shot back bluntly.

Before Atassi could respond, Nasser interrupted.

“What a waste to have struggled for nineteen years to defeat the Jews, only to lose everything bickering among ourselves,” he said. “My brothers, we must stay together at all costs. We will soon come under enormous pressure from the Western powers to re-create a Jewish state along the lines of the original United Nations partition plan. If we hope to put them off, we must stay together.”

“How would *Sayidat El Rayis* handle the situation?” Lebanese President Charles Helou asked.

“I agree with my brother King Hussein and my brother President Atassi—but only because for now we have no alternative but for each army to administer the territory it has conquered. These arrangements, we will agree here, are only temporary. Surely the Palestinians, for whom we waged war, must get their homes back. Surely the Arab nations that spilled blood must be recompensed. Let us agree, then, to meet in a month’s time—I invite you all to Cairo for that purpose—to consider more permanent arrangements for the area.”

Shukairy, who had listened to the exchange with near-panic, was visibly shaken. “And what role is the leader of the Palestinians to have in all this?” he asked.

“That,” Nasser told him icily, “will depend on how much trouble you give us in the days to come.”

For the first time, Shukairy understood that of all the Arabs, only he and the Palestinians would come away from the war empty-handed.

KADDISH

Shock Waves

W. Averell Harriman, Ambassador-at-Large and dean of American diplomats, scrawled his signature across the last page of a handwritten memorandum to the President, then skimmed over it from the beginning. Some of the young hotshots at the State Department might sneer at his simple subheads, Harriman thought, but he was glad he had used them. They broke the memo up nicely and made it easier to read. Besides, the President valued succinctness. Harriman flipped through the pages and read the subheads out loud, savoring their directness:

Item—Why the Soviets want a summit.

Item—Why we want a summit.

Item—What we can reasonably expect to achieve at a summit.

Item—What we will have to give in order to get concessions from the Soviets.

Suddenly Harriman glanced at his watch. It was 6:59 P.M. Alone in the third-floor study of his New York town house, Harriman snapped on a color Magnavox, switched it to Channel 2 and turned up the volume. (At seventy-five, he was hard of hearing in one ear.) The set came to life at the tail end of Excedrin headache number 110. Normally Harriman, a sometime businessman whose personal worth was valued at more than \$100 million, enjoyed television commercials; many of them, he often told friends, were extremely creative. Right now, how-

ever, he was impatient for the news to begin. Promptly at seven, it did.

Across the screen flashed the program's masthead:

THE CBS EVENING NEWS WITH WALTER CRONKITE

Friday, June 16, 1967

Then the announcer: "Direct from our newsroom in New York, in color, this is the *CBS Evening News* with Walter Cronkite—and Eric Sevareid in Washington, Roger Mudd in Washington, Russ Bensley in Saigon, South Vietnam, Don Webster in Da Nang, South Vietnam, Morley Safer in London and Peter Calisher in West Berlin."

On cue, Cronkite, wearing a conservative blue suit, blue shirt and striped tie, swiveled in his chair, looked squarely into the camera and began speaking in the crisply punctuated phrases which have become his trademark.

CRONKITE: Good evening. Any lingering doubt that the conquest of Israel was complete faded today. From Cairo came word of the surrender of the Israeli troops under the command of Brigadier General Avraham Yoffe, who had been holding out in the Ramon Crater, a fortresslike area in the middle of the Negev Desert. If the report is true—and there seems no reason to doubt it—it appears that the last vestige of organized resistance by regular army units to the Arab occupation of Israel has ended. And from Washington, news of another bench mark in the Mideast war that almost went unnoticed in the rush of events. Roger Mudd reports:

MUDD [Standing with back to a line of marchers]: A little over a week ago, nineteen American rabbis took up a vigil across the street from the White House and vowed to remain here until President Johnson intervened on behalf of Israel. Today the rabbis folded their cardboard signs, piled them into a trash basket at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and abandoned the vigil. [Turning to introduce the man behind him] One of them, Rabbi Hillel Litzsky, explains why he and his companions are going home.

LITZSKY: Well, we came here with high hopes that the conscience

of the American people would prevail on the President to take action to end the barbaric invasion of Israel. Now, of course, it is too late. For nineteen hundred years the Jewish people dreamed and planned about re-creating a state in the land of Israel. In one week of treachery, those dreams and those plans were shattered. Now, I suppose, we shall just have to start all over again.

MUDD: Do you think it is possible that the Jews will ever have a national homeland in Israel again?

LITZSKY: It may take another nineteen hundred years, but, yes, Mr. Mudd, we will have our homeland again. And may the good Lord give us better protectors next time than He gave us this time.

MUDD [Turning toward camera]: Perhaps what we are witnessing here today is the secret of survival. For the Jews, the end of one dream always seems to bring with it the beginning of the next. Roger Mudd, CBS News, Washington.

CRONKITE: Yoffe's surrender at the Ramon Crater early today triggered reactions in capitals across Europe. Even as the rabbis gave up their White House vigil . . .

Across the face of Europe, tens of thousands of people rose up in anger against a political system that had failed, for the second time in a generation, to save the Jews from destruction. From London to West Berlin, students, workers and ordinary middle-class citizens went on a savage rampage, burning their countries' leaders in effigy, rioting in city streets and bringing commercial life to a virtual halt. In Paris, some 20,000 people jammed the Avenue de Wagram in front of the Israeli Embassy and for four hours rhythmically chanted "Is-ra-el, Is-ra-el." Automobile drivers took up the rhythm with their car horns, and throughout the day, traffic was backed up all the way to the Place de la Concorde. Later thousands of *gendarmes*, swinging batons and firing tear-gas grenades, were almost unable to contain the howling mob as it tried to storm the National Assembly in the midst of a debate. When several Gaullist deputies came out to try to reason with the demonstrators, they were severely beaten.

In Stockholm, radical students set automobiles afire and

rolled them downhill toward lines of advancing police in hope that they would explode. Two of them did. West Berlin police dispersed a pro-Israeli crowd with water hoses, but not before it succeeded in setting the Egyptian Consulate aflame. In Rome, a group of intellectuals stormed into the Vatican's radio station and smashed every piece of broadcasting equipment in sight. That same night, a torchlight procession of Italian students, labor union members, Catholic clergy and Jews gathered near the Colosseum, in front of the triumphal arch that Emperor Titus had erected to commemorate the sacking of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. While the crowd watched, three boys scaled the monument, unfurled an Israeli flag, and then dumped yellow paint down the sides of the arch. In Amsterdam, 6,000 people gathered in a mass meeting and donned Star of David badges and marched silently through the city to Anne Frank House. And during a stormy rally in London's Trafalgar Square, a distraught middle-aged Israeli businessman, who had been unable to return to his homeland after the outbreak of the war, calmly pulled a pistol from his pocket, placed it against his right temple and squeezed the trigger. On his body was found a note reading: "Once again the world turned its back."

But perhaps the most poignant of the demonstrations took place in Moscow, a city hardly noted for its spontaneous displays of public emotion. There, at dusk on the eve of the Sabbath, thousands of Jews—many of whom had always gone to great lengths to obscure their religious origins—descended on a dilapidated synagogue in Spasoglinishchevsky Lane, one of the three Jewish houses of worship in the Soviet capital. The women, wearing babushkas, crowded into the upstairs gallery; the men, wearing *talises* and hats and fingering well-worn prayer books, filled the main floor. Large groups of young people, a sight rarely seen near Soviet synagogues, hovered in the halls and in the street outside. The aged Chief Rabbi of Moscow, Yehuda Leib Levin, conducted the service without once making a direct reference to Israel. Standing in the incandescent glare of the synagogue's garish neon Star of David, Levin tearfully intoned "Kaddish"—the prayer for the dead.

Even more than in Europe, the destruction of the State of Israel was a soul-searing experience for the people of the United States. Jews and non-Jews alike groped for some way of coping with the reality of defeat—and for some way of dissipating the guilt they felt for having done nothing to prevent it. But at this late hour, their feeble efforts only seemed to enhance their sense of frustration. Some of the more remarkable occurrences:

No sooner had the war ended than thousands of American Jews telephoned the State Department in Washington, pleading for help to get their relatives out of Israel. In every case, State Department operators switched the calls to a tape-recorded message. “Thank you for your call,” a nasal female voice on the tape said. “The appropriate organs of the Department of State are looking into the matter of alleviating the sufferings of victims of the recent war in the Middle East. May we suggest that if you have specific questions on the problem of immigration, you call your local Jewish relief organization or the Department of Naturalization and Immigration.” Unable to get any satisfaction from the State Department, a number of Jewish organizations formed an operation called RESCUE (so quickly was the group formed that no one could think of words to fit the acronym) and began a worldwide effort to arrange the resettlement of Jews from Israel.

To a large extent, the dialogue between Christian theologians and their Jewish colleagues, an outgrowth of the ecumenical spirit fostered by Pope John XXIII, was drowned out by the flood of recriminations that followed the war. Jewish religious leaders expressed public outrage at what they called “the half-hearted support given Israel by Christian churchmen.” They even went so far as to accuse some clergymen of taking what amounted to a pro-Arab position. And Rabbi Jacob Neusner of Dartmouth College denounced “the massive indifference . . . of those from whom most of us hoped for better things.”

The crowd in front of Harlem’s Hotel Theresa on Seventh Avenue and 125th Street was growing more restless by the min-

ute. For more than half an hour, it had listened to an aging, Bible-thumping evangelist work his way through a sermon, the point of which seemed to be that all men—including whitey—were equal before the eyes of God. The crowd was on the point of breaking up when a wedge of burly black nationalist youths shoved through to the curb. As the glaring young men formed a protective semicircle, their bearded leader clambered atop an automobile and began haranguing the listless crowd about the recent war in the Middle East. While he shouted about “war crimes committed by Jews against the Arabs,” two of his followers passed out crudely printed pamphlets which purported to document the Jewish atrocities. All of the handbills had been made available to the black nationalists by Arab diplomats at the United Nations. At the height of the speech, the young man brought his foot crashing down on the roof of the car and bellowed, “The time has come to declare our unshakable unity with our Arab brothers. The Jews who stole the best real estate in the Middle East from the Arabs are the same ones who are stealing the bread out of the mouths of our brothers in Harlem.”

Egyptian Ambassador Mohammed Awed el Kony, accompanied by an aide and a bodyguard, walked briskly away from the United Nations Secretariat Building and headed toward his limousine. He was on his way to the Soviet mission on East Sixty-seventh Street for a luncheon engagement with the Russian ambassador, Nikolai Fedorenko. From long diplomatic experience, El Kony knew that it would not be an entirely social occasion. As he neared his waiting car, he was absorbed in thought, trying to figure out exactly what the Russian might have in mind. Since the end of the war, the relationship between the two delegations had been rather edgy, if only because neither could be certain just what that relationship should be.

The long black car, its motor running, was waiting by the curb. El Kony was about to step in when a young man, dressed in a dark rumpled suit and green fedora hat and waving something in his hand, darted across the street.

“El Kony!” the young man called out.

Before El Kony could look up, his bodyguard dashed into the busy street and flung himself, like a football player making a flying tackle, against the young man's legs. Just then, a pistol shot rang out in United Nations Plaza. Thanks to the quick reflexes of El Kony's bodyguard, the bullet went wild. Later, the police identified the would-be assassin as a half-crazed yeshiva student who belonged to an extreme right-wing Zionist organization. The next day, the *New York Times* deplored the violence. "The attempt on Ambassador El Kony's life," the *Times* editorialized, "will only serve to alienate those in the United Nations who hope to restore, through diplomatic means, the territorial integrity of the State of Israel."

That same issue of the *New York Times* carried a black-bordered advertisement condemning the "rape of Israel." In similar newspaper ads throughout the country, Jewish groups called on their coreligionists to demonstrate their solidarity and sympathy for Israel in a "Day of Mourning." The massive boycott amounted to what the *Washington Post* called "the largest spontaneous demonstration of support for any cause in the history of the United States." From one end of the country to the other, tens of thousands of Jewish store owners, manufacturers and stockbrokers closed their doors for a day. The ensuing disruption of the American economy, however, was short-lived.*

To the middle-aged Jewish couples sitting in the sunken living room of the East Side Manhattan apartment, the aggressive young visitor from Hollywood had at first seemed a glamorous

* The performance of the New York Stock Exchange was a case in point. Originally, of course, the market had been buffeted by the news of the successful Arab first strike; during the first hour of trading on Monday morning, six and a half million shares changed hands and the Dow-Jones Industrial Average plummeted 15 points. But on Tuesday the market opened strong as foundations, mutual funds and individual bargain-hunters began snatching up underpriced issues. Though there was some further slippage over fears of a possible East-West confrontation, the market continued to recover, and at the end of the week was responding to normal trading pressures rather than to the war news from the Middle East. By the time the American Jews conducted their one-day economic boycott, the level of prices on the New York Stock Exchange was actually higher than it had been on the morning the Arabs struck.

curiosity. Earlier in the evening during cocktails, he had regaled them with racy stories about movie stars, and over dinner he had unblushingly boasted how he—a poor boy from Youngstown, Ohio—had climbed “to the pinnacle of the motion picture industry.” Now, settling back in plush sofas with their aperitifs, they confidently awaited his pitch for their money. That pitch never came. Instead, Eric Freed, a boyish-looking movie producer who served as chairman of the Beverly Hills chapter of the United Jewish Appeal, turned suddenly combative. His hands thrust deep inside his pockets, Freed fixed the eight well-dressed men and women with an accusing stare.

“As far as I’m concerned,” he said, “the old UJA is deader than the March of Dimes. So the first thing I want to get straight is that I didn’t come here to appeal to your pocket-books. You can keep your money. You people owe Israel more than that. Every one of you here is a guilty person. If it weren’t for you and Jews like you throughout the United States, Israel could have been saved from destruction.”

Freed’s host, a prominent New York real estate lawyer named Norman Kassman, felt that he had an obligation to protest. “I think you’re way off base,” he said. “I know everyone in this room. And I can tell you that if there was anything more we could have done to save Israel, we would have gladly done it.”

Freed snorted in obvious disgust. “All you people are the same,” he said, waving a finger at Kassman. “I’ve been going around this country making speeches to groups like you, and you’re all just the same. For twenty years, you were the kind of people who bought a few bonds for Israel and maybe even went over there to take a look at the trees they planted in your family name. With those little plaques in memory of your grandmother or something. Now, when Israel’s been obliterated and there’s nobody to plant trees for your grandmother, you take out ads in the *Times* and close down your businesses for a day, and you think that you’ve done your bit. You never learn, do you? Who here opened his mouth when the Egyptians were using gas on the Israeli troops?”

Barbara Kassman, a hard-looking woman with jet-black dyed

hair, turned to her husband. "What gas?" she asked. "What's he talking about?"

Kassman uncrossed his legs. "You know, I told you about that," her husband said. "I showed you the story. It was in the *Times*."

"I don't remember you showing me anything about gas," she said.

"You must have forgotten," he said. "I showed it to you."

"No you didn't," she said firmly. "Judy, did you see anything about gas?"

Judith Stein, a plump woman who wrote children's books, put down her drink. "Yes, of course. It was all over the papers and on television. But the Red Cross said there was never any conclusive proof. Anyway, I don't understand what Mr. Freed expects us to do. The war's over, Mr. Freed. It happened so quickly that even if we wanted to—I don't know—even if we wanted to go there and help fight, it was too late—too quick for us to do anything *concrete*. I mean, it's a tragedy, a terrible tragedy. But I personally don't know what we can do other than what we're doing. You know, trying to get world public opinion aroused and that sort of thing. Through the United Nations. Or writing letters to our Congressmen."

"Congressmen?" The speaker was Dr. Harry Feingold, a conservatively dressed gynecologist who practiced in Larchmont. "Come on, Judy, writing your Congressman went out with the prop plane. We ought to bomb the shit out of the Arabs. A couple of atomic bombs, that's all we need. Knock out a couple of their cities and *make* them give Israel back."

"Harry, you don't know what the hell you're talking about," Kassman said. "First of all, if we start throwing around nuclear bombs, we're going to get into a war with the Russians. And if—"

"There must be something we can do," Feingold said. "We can set up a blockade. Or an invasion. For crying out loud, we should invade them."

"Of course there are things we can do." Eric Freed had rejoined the conversation. "I don't know what this man's name is—"

“Feingold.”

“Well, Mr. Feingold—”

“Doctor.”

“Well, Dr. Feingold, I don’t think we need atomic bombs. This is a powerful nation. We’ve got more than three million men in our army. We’ve got the biggest navy in the world. We could make it plenty hot for the Arabs. That’s not our problem. Our problem is how to get our government to do something.”

“There’s an election coming,” Nathan Baron said. Baron, a ruddy-faced man with thinning gray hair, was a dress manufacturer. He was also a heavy contributor to the Democratic party.

Freed chuckled derisively. “That’s what I mean,” he said. “You people haven’t learned a thing. Listen, the Negroes have voted for the right man in every Presidential election campaign since Harry Truman, and where did it get them? No place. They didn’t get a damn thing until they started burning down a few cities. Then all of us whites suddenly got scared, and we began giving the Negroes a little bigger piece of the pie.”

“So what do you want us to do,” Baron asked angrily, “start burning down New York City, maybe?”

“That might not be such a bad idea,” Freed said.

“If you think that,” Judith Stein said, “then you’re a stupider man than I thought, Mr. Freed. The Negroes burn down their own neighborhoods because they’re a desperate people and their homes are hovels anyway and they don’t have anything to lose. Look around you. Do you think that the Kassmans want to see all these paintings and all this furniture go up in smoke? Or do you suggest that we go around setting fire only to *Gentile* homes?”

Freed motioned with a hand for Judith Stein to stop. “When I said that that wouldn’t be such a bad idea,” he explained, “I naturally didn’t expect you to take me literally. What I meant was”—and here he clenched his fist—“we can’t sit around like Jewish Uncle Toms. We’ve got to raise a howl. I still think we can learn from the Negroes. We’ve got to provoke confrontation.”

“Like what?” Kassman asked.

“Like civil disobedience,” Freed shot back. “Work stoppages. Economic boycotts. Withholding taxes. Mass marches. Seizures of universities by Jewish students—”

“I really *do* think you are mad,” Judith Stein said.

Dr. Feingold cocked his head to the side and squinted at Freed through his black-rimmed eyeglasses. “What do you mean, ‘seizures of universities?’”

“Just that,” Freed said. “Bring the universities to a screeching halt. Listen, there are five million seven hundred thousand Jews in this country, right? But do you know that a quarter of the students at Harvard are Jewish? Jews own half of the book-publishing houses. They run two of the most powerful newspapers. They control a large portion of the retail business in America. They staff many of our hospitals. Seventeen out of every hundred lawyers in the United States are Jews. The entertainment industry—movies, theater, television, symphony orchestras, fine art—the whole works, it’s dominated by Jews. Listen, we’ve got a fantastic clout in this country. We can turn it upside down and inside out. We can pull out the stops, and the whole damn country’ll go gurgling down the drain.”

By now, Freed was mesmerized by his own words, by the enormous power he had loosed in his imagination, by a vision of a smug America being punished for its sins. A mustache of sweat had formed on his upper lip, and he wiped it off with a handkerchief. The others looked at him in shocked amazement.

“I just don’t know what to say,” Kassman murmured. “Freed, you sound to me like you’re writing the script for a bad B-grade movie. What you’re advocating is a kind of civil war. Five and a half million Jews, some of whom admittedly are in important positions, are supposed to stop what they’re doing and rush out onto the streets and make a hundred and ninety-five million other people pee in their pants in fright. That doesn’t sound very realistic to me, Freed. The Jews in America would never buy it. If anything, what’s happened to Israel has made our situation in this country less secure than at any time since the nineteen thirties. Israel’s defeat was a defeat for us, too, and everybody knows it. So we’re not so powerful as you think. If

Jewish businessmen like Baron here tried to put a monkey wrench in our economy, you'd see a wave of anti-Semitic reaction that'd make your hair stand on end. Anything like you suggest would diminish our influence, not increase it."

Freed whistled a long, falling note. "Boy, you really have a bad case of the heebie-jeebies."

"Just a minute," Baron said. "You said you've been traveling around the country trying to convince other people like us that you're right. Well, I'd be interested to know what their reaction was to your—your schemes."

"My *schemes*?"

"Whatever you want to call them."

"To be blunt, so far it's been pretty disappointing."

Judith Stein stood up and straightened the back of her dress. Her husband, a tall, round-shouldered man who had hardly said a word all night, got up, too. It was clear that they were leaving.

"It's been nice meeting you," Judith Stein said. "I think you have your answer."

Through the picture window of the BOAC boarding lounge at John F. Kennedy Airport, the scrawny, curly-haired young man watched nervously as the sky filled with heavy black rain clouds. He had spent his last dollar traveling from Pasadena to New York and buying a one-way airplane ticket to Amman, Jordan. All that was now left of his meager savings was a few miserable coins. If the flight was postponed, he would be stranded in this strange city for yet another unbearably lonesome day.

He glanced around the waiting room. It was filled with dark-skinned Arab men like him, all of them waiting for the same plane, all of them as excited and as tense as he was. They were returning—or so they hoped—to their homes in Palestine, homes they considered usurped by the Jews nineteen years before.

On a sudden thought, the young man reached into his breast pocket to make sure that his papers were still there. He had lived in America for ten years, long enough to know about the

pickpockets who regularly plied their trade in railroad stations and airports. His fingers felt for the telegram again. He took out a wad of papers, bound by a rubber band, and slipped out his Jordanian passport. Folded between its pages was a loose piece of yellow paper, worn thin from constant reading. Typed on it in Western Union characters was the message that had started this young man on his long journey home.

“The days of our humiliation are over,” the telegram said. “Return and claim what is rightfully yours.” It was signed: “Father.”

The telegram was hardly back inside the Jordanian passport when the uniformed clerk behind the BOAC counter in the middle of the lounge clicked on the loudspeaker. “Ladies and gentlemen, BOAC flight five-thirty is now boarding at the loading ramp. Please have your boarding passes ready.” He paused. “Ladies and gentlemen, BOAC flight . . .”

The second invitation to board the plane was hardly necessary. Long before the announcement was over, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, a twenty-four-year-old Palestinian, one hand gripping a worn imitation leather valise, the other protecting the papers in his breast pocket, was on his way to rejoin his Arab brothers—to share with them their moment of supreme triumph as well as the spoils of war.

President Johnson’s popularity had plummeted. Ten days after the end of the war, 84 percent of those questioned by the Gallup poll said they thought the President had “badly mismanaged the Mideast crisis.” Another survey, taken by Oliver Quaille at about the same time, revealed that 22 percent of the American electorate wanted Johnson to resign. Looking drawn and dejected (and alarmingly white as the result of too much pancake makeup), the President made a nationwide television speech on Friday, June 23. Declared the President: “Looking back over the sequence of events, it seems clear to me that every action your government could have taken was taken. No course of action was left unexamined. As your President, I spent many sleepless hours conferring with our representatives around the globe. I held no fewer than thirty-two separate meetings with

my advisers, examining and reexamining every possibility. And tonight I come before you to tell you that everything that could have been done was done and that Americans can be proud that their country, instead of acting rashly or out of emotion, acted wisely and helped prevent the crisis from developing into a disastrous Third World War.” *

The President’s speech did nothing to lift the veil of gloom that had descended on the nation’s capital. For weeks, Washington’s fashionable Sans Souci restaurant, which normally boasted a handful of Senators, Congressmen and a Cabinet member or two among its luncheon guests, was practically empty. One veteran British correspondent, Henry Brandon of the *London Sunday Times*, who had reported on the Washington scene for eighteen years, summed up the atmosphere in an article for his newspaper. “It is as if a nuclear bomb had been exploded in the Middle East,” he wrote, “and everyone in Washington was bracing for the shock waves.”

When the storm finally struck, the third week after the end of the war, it shook Washington to its foundations. Institutions that had prided themselves on their detachment from international politics suddenly found themselves enveloped in an atmosphere of bitter character assassination. Somehow Interior Secretary Stewart Udall turned up in a newspaper column as one of the villains of the Middle East affair. Hundreds of government people—most, but by no means all of them, Jews—resigned in protest. The upheaval reached high into government circles. Arthur Goldberg, his eyes red-rimmed, emerged from the White House to announce that he was stepping down as Ambassador to the United Nations. Johnson offered the job to former Deputy Secretary of State George W. Ball, but he refused. And for months the post went unfilled. The Supreme Court’s Abe Fortas, the man who had helped the President organize the meeting with Jewish leaders during the war, penned

* The following day, the *Times’s* James Reston commented in an unusually bitter column: “President Johnson has never been at his best on the television screen, but his performance last night had nothing to do with a maladjustment to the electronic medium. He had the opportunity to explain to a confused people how this country, with all its wealth and resources and good intentions, could fail to live up to its commitments. Instead, he spent 43 minutes of prime television time telling us how hard he works at his job.”

a note to Lyndon Johnson (“ . . . my disgrace to have played even a small role . . .”) and returned to his private law practice. CIA chief Richard Helms sent Johnson a letter of resignation (“In my business, one shouldn’t get the chance to be this wrong twice”) which the President promptly accepted.

Nowhere, however, were the recriminations more bitter than on the floor of the United States Senate. There, in an emotion-charged session that had even the most blasé Washington reporters sitting on the edge of their seats in the press gallery, Senator after Senator rose to condemn the Johnson Administration’s inactivity. The climax to the debate came when Senator F. William Fulbright, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, admitted that he had privately cautioned the Administration against unilateral involvement in the Mideast crisis. But, argued Fulbright, “the ultimate responsibility for the disaster in the Middle East still rests on the President’s shoulders. If the United States had not squandered its moral capital in Vietnam, it would have been able to rally its allies for a concerted effort in the Middle East.” Fulbright paused and spread his arms dramatically. “How odd, how ironic,” he intoned, “that it was Vietnam that was supposed to demonstrate to men everywhere this country’s determination to meet its commitments, but instead demonstrated our inability to meet those commitments. One misadventure in Southeast Asia laid bare the limits of our power to our adversaries in the Middle East.” Then, more subdued, Fulbright added, “I must in good conscience declare that the blood of thousands of Israelis is on the hands of this Administration.”

Fulbright’s remarks touched off an angry, at times hysterical, outburst from Senator Jacob Javits. “If Senators like my colleague from Arkansas had made it clear on June 5 or June 6 that they would have supported intervention,” cried Javits, “the United States would have been able to save Israel. Their failure to take a stand was tantamount to high treason to Western civilization.”

Two days later, Fulbright convened a special Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on the Mideast war. The committee’s marble-paneled chamber was bathed in television lights, and as the Senators entered the room and stepped over

the TV cables, they winced because of the painful glare. The star witness for the day was Secretary of State Dean Rusk. It was no secret to the members of the committee that Rusk had been among the few advisers who had urged the President to intervene unilaterally to save Israel from destruction. But they also knew that Rusk had absolutely no intention of abandoning his role as a loyal Administration spokesman by publicly criticizing the President's failure to follow his advice.

"I just don't understand why you want to go through with this drill," Rusk told Stuart Symington, one of the committee's members, the night before the hearing began. "It's going to be like something out of *Alice in Wonderland*. I'm certainly not going to massage my ego by telling you that the President was wrong and I was right. And I don't suppose you fellows are going to admit that you were just as wrong as the President until it was too late. But, hell, if you want to step through the looking glass, I'll go along for the ride."

Thus, with more than fifty million Americans (including President Johnson) watching on television, Rusk and the Foreign Relations Committee took the plunge. From the start, the questions from the committee were often viciously direct. His eyes smarting from the glare of the TV lights, Fulbright adjusted a pair of borrowed sunglasses and quietly launched his attack.

"Can you tell us, Mr. Secretary, if the report in today's edition of the *Washington Post* concerning U.S. diplomatic overtures to Egypt is substantially correct?"

The blank expression on Rusk's moon-shaped face never changed. He leaned back for a moment to confer with an aide, then turned toward Fulbright. "I have no personal knowledge of such overtures, Mr. Chairman, but I'll be glad to have one of my aides go over our records and submit a more positive answer at a later date if you like." *

* Ten days later, Rusk sent a letter to the Foreign Relations Committee, which was then inserted in the transcript of the hearing. It read: "A preliminary search of recent State Department records has failed to turn up any evidence of any formal diplomatic contact between the United States and Egypt since the end of the Middle East war. The search of the records is continuing." The "search" was still going on months later.

“That would be fine, Mr. Secretary,” Fulbright said, “but in view of the recent events in the Middle East, could you, on principle, rule out such a possibility?”

Rusk puffed on a cigarette for a moment, then responded: “You know as well as I do, Senator, that nothing can—or, for that matter, should—be ruled out when it comes to foreign affairs.”

Fulbright jumped into the breach. “Are you suggesting, Mr. Secretary, that it is within the realm of possibility that, hard on the heels of the invasion and occupation of Israel, not to mention the break in diplomatic relations initiated by Cairo, the United States might even consider doing business with the Egyptian government?”

Rusk parried nicely. “We are often forced to do business with people we don’t like,” he said. “Certainly, if we hope to have any influence on Egypt—and if we hope to reach some understanding at the UN on an eventual withdrawal of Arab forces from Israel—we must retain some freedom of action with respect to Cairo.”

And so it went for the better part of six hours, as all nine members of the Foreign Relations Committee took turns questioning Rusk. By 4:30 P.M., the Secretary’s eyes were smarting, too, and he asked Fulbright how long the committee planned to continue the session.

“I should think, Mr. Secretary, until we’ve shed some light on the tragic events of the recent weeks,” Fulbright said.

Just before national television coverage ended at 6:30, the confrontation between Fulbright and Rusk took on angry overtones.

“Let me make sure that I understand what you’re telling us,” Fulbright said. “Are you saying that if the members of the Senate had made it clear that they wanted the Administration to act unilaterally, this would have been sufficient to move the Administration into taking unilateral steps to aid Israel?”

For an instant, Rusk’s Buddha-like composure cracked. “Obviously the Senator is twisting my words,” he said. “I’ll be damned if I’ll sit here and be treated this way.”

“Mr. Secretary, I am not trying to do any such thing,” Ful-

bright replied. "I'm simply trying to get you to make explicit what you have so far chosen to hint at coyly."

But Fulbright was too late. Embarrassed by his display of emotion, Rusk had already resumed his unruffled pose. "I would suggest," the Secretary said with exaggerated mildness, "that it is a matter of where you are sitting, Senator, that determines who you think is acting coyly. All I said was that the Senate, and especially this committee, had created the kind of pressure that made it increasingly difficult for the President to discharge his constitutional responsibilities in the field of foreign affairs. As the President made clear in his television speech the other night, he consulted many people, including a number of you who are sitting here today, about the proper course this nation should take during the Mideast war. You yourself, Mr. Chairman, have made no secret of what you thought we should do at that time."

"No, I suppose I haven't tried to pretend about that," Fulbright said. "Do you suppose, Mr. Secretary, that you might enlighten us on exactly what position *you* took during the war?"

Rusk lowered his head and stared at Fulbright from under his eyebrows. "In the normal course of any day," he said, "I might bring before the President quite a few different options and alternate avenues of action in the field of foreign affairs."

"Yes, yes, we know that," Fulbright interrupted. "But what we're trying to find out, Mr. Secretary, is specifically what avenue of action you suggested the President should take while the war was still on."

"I know what you're trying to find out, Mr. Chairman," Rusk said, "but I don't think that it would serve any useful purpose for me to divulge privileged information of that sort in this kind of atmosphere, with television cameras present and reporters taking down every word."

"If you have something to hide—" Fulbright began.

"I have nothing to hide," Rusk snapped back.

"I say, if you have something to hide," Fulbright continued, "I suppose we could arrange for you to testify in closed session."

"That shouldn't be necessary," Rusk said.

“Well, I don’t know,” Fulbright pressed on, “but whatever it is you’re ashamed of—”

“I’m not ashamed of anything,” Rusk declared. “In due time, the full record of this period will become known, and we’ll all be judged by history. Obviously I can’t speak for you, Mr. Chairman. But as for myself, I look forward confidently to that day.”

Even while Rusk was testifying, a junior member of his staff at the United Nations was having dinner with a Soviet journalist at the Gloucester House on Manhattan’s East Fiftieth Street. Their conversation centered on the arrival, the day before, of Premier Alexei Kosygin, who had come to New York to attend a special General Assembly debate on the Mideast crisis.

“Of course,” the Russian said, “I am speaking for myself and not for the Soviet mission, but I can see no reason why Premier Kosygin would not meet with President Johnson. Naturally, everything would depend on whether a time and place can be arranged to suit the Premier’s hectic schedule.”

Immediately after supper, the American raced to a pay telephone and put in a long-distance call to his superior at the United States mission. Half an hour later, Rusk, dog-tired from his grueling session with the Foreign Relations Committee, was on the line to the President.

“The Russians have dropped a hint that they will go for a summit, Mr. President,” Rusk said, and then went on to explain about the meeting at the Gloucester House.

“Okay,” Johnson snapped. “Let’s make an offer. Pick out someplace halfway between Washington and New York. I can juggle my schedule, so the time isn’t important. And don’t forget to keep this thing on a low level until we have a definite yes from them. I don’t want to look like I’m begging them to talk to me.”

Exactly an hour and fifteen minutes later, an undersecretary at the U.S. mission casually invited a Soviet cultural attaché to the bar at the United Nations Delegates’ Lounge.

“Dmitri,” the American said, “how would your Premier like to visit Glassboro, New Jersey?”

“My dear Alex,” the Russian answered, sipping a vodka martini, “you realize, no doubt, that it is not for me to say where my Premier will go, but I very much doubt that he would find time just now to leave New York City.”

Ultimately it was Johnson who gave in first.

“The bastards know we need this one more than they do,” he told Rusk. “Okay, I’ll come to them.”

The next morning, the *New York Times* headlined Johnson’s offer: “JOHNSON SEEKS SUMMIT WITH SOVIET PREMIER” and, in smaller type, “Will Meet Kosygin Any Time, Any Place.” Later that afternoon, Premier Kosygin paused on the doorstep of the Soviet UN mission and told reporters that he would be delighted to meet with President Johnson.

The summit was finally held on July 2, at W. Averell Harriman’s townhouse at 16 East Eighty-first Street, a quiet, tree-lined street off Central Park. Johnson arrived promptly at 10 A.M., lingered a moment in the marble-floored reception hall to chat with Ambassador Harriman and Dean Rusk, then strode up the circular staircase to the second-floor drawing room that had been set aside for the meeting. The room was decorated with lemon-yellow draperies and slipcovers to match. Hanging on the walls were priceless masterpieces by Picasso, Renoir, Cézanne and Van Gogh. And there, in front of a marble fireplace, the leaders of the two most powerful nations in the world finally confronted each other.

The two men, accompanied only by their top aides and their translators, got down to business quickly. If Johnson seemed overanxious (something the Russians, always keen bargainers, noticed immediately), it was because he knew he had to get concessions out of the Russians. Thus, the President stated his case logically—but carefully tacked on the merest hint of a threat.

“Mr. Chairman,” Johnson said, “we have one overriding concern at this point. The Arabs’ military victory cannot be allowed to stand as the final judgment on the fate of Israel. The world is too precarious a place to allow permanent changes in

the balance of power to be decided by force of arms. This would only establish an atmosphere of lawlessness in which eventually the two world superpowers would find themselves caught up with disastrous consequences."

Kosygin listened quietly to the running translation. (His translator, Viktor M. Sukhodrev, a master of linguistics who spoke English without the faintest trace of a foreign accent, hurriedly whispered at the end of the translation that he thought Johnson was using carefully prepared phrases and sentences, many of which had cropped up in previous Johnson speeches.) Then the Soviet Premier adjusted a pair of metal-rimmed spectacles on his nose, nodded and asked the President to continue his "presentation."

Kosygin's barb found its mark. Johnson was visibly upset by the reference to "presentation."

"I am not making a presentation, Mr. Chairman," he shot back. "I am trying to find some common ground upon which we can construct a stable *status quo*."

Kosygin scribbled a note to himself on a pad, then crossed it out and waved his hand in the air.

"What exactly do you have in mind, Mr. President?"

"The Arabs," Johnson said, "may, of course, want to keep some of the territory they occupied in the war, but they must allow the State of Israel to exist. In addition, I understand that the Arabs are at this moment instituting a harsh occupation policy in Israel. This has to stop. The United States—I—cannot afford to sit by and allow this to happen."

For an instant, Kosygin was taken aback by the candor with which Johnson revealed his own political vulnerability. This man may be in more trouble than we calculated, Kosygin thought. But Kosygin had his instructions and he plunged on, intent on seeing just how vulnerable Johnson was.

"I have listened carefully to what you have said, Mr. President," Kosygin said, choosing his words slowly and carefully. "There are some points I would like to make to you. The Arabs won their victory under the most impeccable conditions. No one helped them. They did it themselves. It was, furthermore, a war of national liberation. It was an example of an oppressed

people rising up and throwing off the shackles of neocolonialism. Israel was a canker in the Mideast. It was a Western creation, a Western puppet, Western in tradition, Western in temperament, Western in alignment. The Arabs have only accomplished what every oppressed people wants to accomplish. They have regained what is rightfully theirs. The Soviet Union, as you are well aware through our Hot Line discussions, did not take a single aggressive step during the war. Our hands are clean. And it would be acting in contradiction to our philosophy and our historic traditions if we now abandoned the Arabs at this juncture. No, Mr. President, we will not do that."

Johnson relaxed in his armchair and abruptly changed the subject—or so it seemed.

"It is my understanding, Mr. Chairman, that you and I have something in common."

Kosygin's curiosity was only mildly aroused. "What is that?"

"We are both grandfathers." Johnson reached into his breast pocket and pulled out a three-by-five photograph of his infant grandson, Patrick Lyndon Nugent. "As grandfathers, Mr. Chairman, we have an added obligation to the human race to prevent nuclear holocaust. It is up to us to fulfill these obligations."

Kosygin again chose to ignore the implied threat. "Mr. President," he said, "I am aware of my obligation as a grandfather and, of course, I hope we can reach an accommodation. We, for our part, would certainly be happy to talk to the Arabs about their occupation policy. But would you, for your part, be willing to make a reciprocal gesture—such as lifting the siege of North Vietnam?"

Johnson's eyes narrowed. "That's just not acceptable," he said coldly. "The United States must also stick by its friends, Mr. Chairman, and support them no matter what it takes. I'm not anxious to see the war in Vietnam expand as a result of any misunderstanding between us today."

Suddenly Kosygin suspected that he had misjudged Johnson's position. Perhaps the loss of Israel had hurt the United States so deeply that further pressure might make the wounded lion react in incalculable ways.

And so the conversation continued, thrust and parry, with neither Johnson nor Kosygin giving an inch. Toward the end of their talks, Kosygin turned to Johnson and said, "Mr. President, we don't seem to be getting anywhere, do we? But I think it would be unsettling for our peoples and the world at large for us to leave this room without a semblance of agreement. What I'm suggesting is that we have our aides draw up a communiqué stressing the friendly atmosphere which prevailed at this meeting."

Johnson heaved his shoulders. "Well, frankly, I'm downright disappointed," he said. "I hoped for more. Still . . ."

Two hours and forty minutes after the meeting began, Johnson and Kosygin emerged arm in arm from Harriman's brownstone to face a battery of cameras and an excited throng of people. Smiling broadly, Johnson stepped up to a microphone and said, "I believe it is fair to say that we have made the world a little smaller and also a little less dangerous."

The crowd cheered wildly. "We want Kosygin!" (They pronounced it Kasse-gin.) Kosygin responded warmly, waving his arms and smiling. Then he spoke briefly while Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin rattled off a running translation. The crowd cheered each phrase. "I want friendship with the American people," he said. "I can assure you we want nothing but peace with the American people."

Behind them, one of Kosygin's aides emerged from the town house and walked up to an American journalist of Russian origin whom he knew. Throwing his arms around the American and kissing him on both cheeks, the Russian said excitedly, "This is a breakthrough—it is a historic moment for Soviet-American relations."

Perhaps the first to see through the thin disguise of Soviet-American harmony was NBC news commentator David Brinkley. Indeed, when he went on television that night, Brinkley presented a grim picture of the mood of the American body politic nearly one month after the end of the war. "Suddenly," said Brinkley, leaning toward the camera, "the old distinctions that separated hawks from doves, liberals from conservatives,

moralists from pragmatists, interventionists from isolationists all seem to be meaningless. Suddenly the distinction between the world of appearance and the world of reality seems lost in the press of the news. Perhaps the confusion of the moment was best captured by William Butler Yeats, who wrote: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, the blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere the ceremony of innocence is drowned." Good night, Chet."

"Good night, David."

Falling Dominoes

The White House, January 8, 1968

“Don’t turn the page yet,” she said, “I haven’t finished.”

“Listen, Bird, skim, don’t read every word,” he said.

She looked up from the page.

“Lyndon, you know I can’t read as fast as you do,” she said, trying to placate her irritated husband.

But Lyndon Johnson refused to be placated. Ignoring his wife, he impatiently flipped the page. It was 1:45 in the morning, and the President and Lady Bird had been sitting for almost two hours in bed, propped up on pillows, working their way through the formidable pile of night reading between the President’s knees. Now they were engrossed in a document prepared by the CIA’s Deputy Director of Intelligence, marked: INTELLIGENCE CHECK LIST—FOR THE PRESIDENT—TOP SECRET. For a moment, Johnson toyed with the idea of ordering the CIA to provide two copies of the intelligence report every night so that Lady Bird—who customarily read over the President’s shoulder—could peruse at her own pace. But he dismissed the thought instantly. Considering the momentous decision he had come to, it hardly seemed to matter.

Nervously Johnson tilted the electric alarm clock on his night table to see what time it was and then took an enormous bite out of a thick roast beef sandwich.

“For heaven’s sake, stop fidgeting,” Lady Bird said, “and call them up.”

“You don’t miss a trick, do you, Bird?” Johnson said, his mouth full. He picked up the telephone on his night table.

"This is the President," he said. "Anything on the raid yet?" Johnson listened for a moment and hung up.

"Well?"

"Nothing."

The President was obviously disappointed. Earlier in the day, he had given the "Go" to launch the first air strike against the system of dikes in North Vietnam's populous Red River Delta—an attack his Pacific commanders had been clamoring for ever since American troops invaded North Vietnam the previous month. (The President had been persuaded to invade the North only after his advisers unanimously recommended the move as the one way to demonstrate that America—its Mid-east fiasco notwithstanding—was not a paper tiger.) Now Johnson was anxious to get the results of the strike and to see the reaction to his new and crucial escalation.

His mind half a world away, the President absentmindedly began to turn another page of the report, but Lady Bird gently rested her hand on his.

"I sometimes wonder if these CIA reports are really worth all the time and effort you put into them," she said. "Now look at this item. Do you really think that Mr. Kosygin is in as much hot water as they say he is?"

"Your guess is as good as mine," Johnson replied. "But when I met him in New York, he didn't strike me like he was ready to be stuffed and put up on the mantel."

While he talked, the President scribbled in the margin of the page: "More details." Then he quickly skimmed the next two items. The first, on Indonesia, said simply: "No change." The second, a long paragraph on West Germany, was titled: "Turning Toward Moscow?" Next was a report on the Middle East which described in cold, dispassionate terms the latest developments in the harsh Arab occupation of Israel and chronicled the most recent success in Nasser's drive to consolidate his position in the Arab world. Interestingly, the report added a caveat which, though Johnson did not know it, had been the subject of considerable debate within the U.S. intelligence community. "With Israel out of the way," it said, "look for a

long-run decline in Arab unity—and trouble for Nasser from some of the leaders now considered to be in his pocket.”

This time, Lady Bird finished reading the page before her husband—a sure indication that he was having trouble concentrating. She lifted the report from his hands and closed it.

“Lyndon,” she said, “you haven’t been able to focus your mind on any single thing for more than ten seconds. Are we going to talk about it or aren’t we? It’s time we made up our minds.”

Johnson’s eyes narrowed as they always did when he braced himself for an unpleasant task. He took off his rimless spectacles.

“I’ve already made the decision, Bird,” he said. His voice was flat and barely audible.

A sudden chill came over Lady Bird, and she rubbed the sides of her arms. She was terribly disappointed. When Johnson had first raised the subject with her weeks before, the idea had seemed so tentative. And she had taken it for granted that he would not make a final decision without getting her approval. She groped for something to say.

“I always thought—” Suddenly Lady Bird reached out, took her husband’s hand and squeezed it.

“Have you told the girls?”

Johnson forced himself to laugh. “No. As usual, I thought I’d leave the dirty work to you.”

“What can I tell them?” she asked.

“Tell them,” he said, still forcing a smile, “that their daddy is going back to the ranch and put his feet up on the porch railings and watch the Pedernales roll by.”

There was a long silence, and the smile slowly faded from Johnson’s haggard face. Then the words came, spilling out in a disjointed soliloquy that fluctuated between self-pity and self-justification.

“Where did we go wrong? What could we have done? Would somebody else have done differently? All I wanted for this country was the same things I wanted for the girls. A decent life. Self-respect. I was a Southerner, and they didn’t want me

sitting in this house. They didn't think a Southerner could do what I've done. But who's done more to try and unify this country than I have? You know what I've gone through. How many people go to bed wondering if they'll wake up and have to start World War Three?"

Lady Bird didn't say anything.

"Jack Kennedy talked and I shoehorned the bills through. I could puke the way those Eastern liberals talk. You'd think I started the mess in Vietnam. I never had a choice. What was I supposed to do, let Vietnam go down the drain? If I'd done that, I'd have been tarred and feathered out of this city. And the Middle East. I was locked in. I swear by all that's holy, Bird, if I could have saved that little country . . . I never told you, but the CIA reckoned that the Russians weren't bluffing. One false step and that would have been it. Besides, Nasser knew I didn't have any options. How could I explain to the mothers that I was sending in a thousand Marines to fight a hundred thousand Arabs? Can you see the casualty lists now? 'Butcher Johnson blunders again.' That's what the newsboys would've been writing. And those Israelis. They've always claimed they could fend for themselves. Just let them go, they said, and . . ."

Johnson ran out of breath. He looked at Lady Bird and leaned back against the pillows. When he started to talk again, he was much calmer, and his thoughts were more ordered. Lady Bird sensed that the storm had passed.

"I've been brooding over this thing very carefully, Bird," Johnson said. "I'm convinced our policies are good policies. But Jesus Christ Almighty, we've got to face facts. People won't understand those policies so long as I'm the man who's carrying them out. I've never been popular"—here Johnson waved down Lady Bird—"no, it's true, I've never been popular. Camelot was too hard an act for anybody to follow. I figure if I step aside now, before the end of the term, things may work out for the party and the country. It'll give people a chance to judge the policies, not the man. It'll give the policies a chance to work. And they will work. And Hubert will get the credit for

every success he can notch up. Come convention time, he should be able to sew up the nomination.”

Lady Bird’s eyes were moist. “Lyndon, are you really convinced—or are you just trying to convince yourself?”

“I suppose it’s a little of both, Bird,” he answered. “But in the marrow of my bones, I think it’s the right thing to do. For the short run, it can only help unify the country behind Hubert. And in the long run, I judge that the history books won’t be too hard on old Lyndon. They’ll say, ‘Nothing befitted him so much as the manner of his retirement.’” The smile began to creep over Johnson’s face once again. “And anyway, it’ll be nice to see the Pedernales again, won’t it, Bird?”

“It *will* be nice to see the Pedernales again, Lyndon. It really will.”

Harmon-on-Hudson, N.Y., April 15, 1968

Spring came early to the Hudson River valley. Golden yellow and pale purple, the crocuses bloomed in March, and by early April, daffodils, jonquils and tulips were out in colorful profusion. The weather turned so balmy, in fact, that Herman Kahn decided to hold the first class of his spring seminar outside under the dogwood trees of the Hudson Institute. (Twice a year, Kahn—one of America’s foremost civilian strategists—conducted a week-long seminar at his Harmon-on-Hudson “think tank” for a small group of invited guests—businessmen from the nation’s defense industry, Foreign Service officers, military men and journalists.) But a sudden thunderstorm drove the group inside to one of the institute’s classrooms, where the members took seats around a horseshoe-shaped table. On one wall hung a chart with the title:

Basic National Security Policies in the Decade Ahead

Alternate World Futures: Issues and Themes

A pile of magazines was strewn on top of a desk, along with the uncorrected galley proofs of Kahn’s latest monograph, *The Age of the Nuclear Six Gun: An Inquiry into the Effects of*

Technology on Proliferation. There was also an advance copy of a book the *New York Times* had commissioned Kahn to review. Its title: *If Israel Won the War*.*

Standing in front of the room before a white screen, Kahn asked an assistant to draw the window shades and switch off the lights. In the darkness, silhouetted against the screen by the light of the slide projector, Kahn looked like Alfred Hitchcock—a large, lumpy, pear-shaped man with a bald head. His assistant put the first slide into the projector, and the word “Domino” flashed across the front of Kahn’s short-sleeved white shirt. A second word, “Theory,” was imprinted on the screen.

“Dominoes,” Kahn began, slapping the screen with a glass pointer, “is the most underrated game in the world. If I know my Soviets, they play it in their sleep. In America, you’re considered naïve if you still believe in the domino theory. A few months ago, when I went down to Washington to talk dominoes to the Pentagon, they looked at me like I was wearing last year’s dress. Dominoes? It sounded like tiddledywinks. But lately, they’ve started to listen.”

Kahn pounded the screen again with his glass pointer and, putting the toe of his right shoe on his left instep, balanced on one foot.

“What are dominoes?” he continued. “How does the game work? If a man flushes his toilet in Kuala Lumpur and the drains get clogged in Djakarta, you can’t blame that on the domino theory. That’s just bad Indonesian plumbing. [Kahn chuckled at his own joke.] But if the United States doesn’t raise a finger to save Israel and then West Germany asks us to close down our missile bases, well, that’s a different story. Obviously the boys in Bonn are playing dominoes.”

To the fascination of everyone in the classroom, Kahn remained balanced on one foot as he spewed out his words in rapid-fire succession. “The trouble with the domino theory

* “Provocative,” Kahn was later to write, “but basically flawed because the credibility of the book rests on the implausible thesis that Israel could have duplicated the Arabs’ devastatingly effective surprise first blow in the air and followed it up with a massive ground assault—all at a time when the Arabs were already completely mobilized and poised for attack.”

has been that everybody's tended to see it in mechanistic terms. If one country falls to the Communists, those countries in the same geographical area—and especially the adjacent ones—are supposed to fall, too.”

A slide of a world map was projected onto the screen.

“Actually, as we saw in the case of Israel last summer,” Kahn said, “it doesn't work that way. It's not so simple. Dominoes are about as complicated and perversely irrational as a Jesuit's argument on behalf of the existence of God. And you can't get more complicated and perverse than that.”

Here the class broke into laughter.

“The reason the Germans invited us out of their country last November was because they didn't think they could count on our protection any longer. It's my guess that after our humiliation over Israel in June, we would have been prepared to offer the Germans even bigger guarantees. And we would have stuck to them. But the Germans weren't convinced. They lost faith in the United States. President Johnson's resignation didn't help.* But nobody can accuse the Germans of converting to Communism. There's a wide variety of things they can do now, including cozying up to Moscow. That's what makes dominoes such a fascinating game—and one that's so hard to play that few people play it well. But my motto is: 'If something is worth doing, it may be worth doing badly.' ”

There was more laughter. Kahn hit the screen with his glass pointer, and this time the point snapped off. Even louder laughter.

“Happens all the time,” Kahn said. “I average four a week.” He picked up the broken piece, then began to pace back and forth in front of the room.

“Okay,” he said, “now that you're all experts on the domino theory, let's talk about the Middle East. How many people here think that last year's war between the Arabs and Israel

* On January 12, 1968, in the midst of a nationwide television speech, Johnson stunned the world by announcing that he was resigning because “I can serve the cause of peace better as a private citizen than as a President who has lost the confidence of his people.” That same night, Hubert Horatio Humphrey was sworn in as the thirty-seventh President of the United States.

involved a serious confrontation between Russia and America?"

Hesitantly, three or four men looked around the room and raised their hands.

"You're right," Kahn said, and the way he said it sounded as though he was rewarding precocious schoolchildren. "Now, how many think that that confrontation followed the same pattern of confrontations we've had with the Soviet Union since the end of the Second World War?"

This time, about half of the people in the class raised their hands.

"You're wrong," Kahn said. "Let's look at the pattern of our relations with the Soviets since the end of the war. That pattern was molded by two major events."

A new slide flashed on the screen, and Kahn stabbed at it with the stubby end of his broken pointer.

"First," he said, "was the Berlin airlift. We demonstrated to the Russians that there was a clearly defined line beyond which we wouldn't allow them to cross. Second was the Hungarian uprising in 1956. We sat on our hands and watched Russian tanks roll into Budapest because we knew that there was a clearly defined line beyond which the Russians wouldn't allow us to cross."

Immediately a number of hands shot into the air. "Haven't you overlooked a few things?" asked one of the businessmen. "How about the Vietnam War?"

"And Korea," someone else added.

"Don't forget the Cuban missile crisis," a third voice piped up.

"All these just reinforced the rule," Kahn shot back. "And the rule is"—here Kahn stepped back and drew an imaginary line on the ground in front of him—"Put one toe over that line and we fight."

Another slide came on the screen showing a map of the Middle East.

"Now," said Kahn, "last June's war was another matter altogether. For the first time since the end of the Second World War, one side—the Russian side—crossed a clearly defined line

and got away with it. It doesn't make any difference that they did it by proxy—through the Arabs. The fact remains that the Russians redrew the map of the Middle East by force of arms. For almost a year now, Washington has been trying to convince people that a domino didn't fall when Israel went under and that the world balance of power remained the same. To prove this, we waxed tough. We resumed the testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere. (Off the record, I can assure you, if you don't know it already, that our excuse—the story about the Russians starting first—was a pure fabrication.) And, of course, we invaded North Vietnam last December, just before Johnson resigned. But the point about dominoes, as I said before, is that the game depends as much on psychology as physical force. If people *believe* that the power balance has shifted in favor of the Soviets, for all intents and purposes it has. The West Germans certainly believe it has, and that's why they recognized the Oder-Neisse line and began withdrawing forces from NATO control. Our allies in Western Europe believe it has, and that's why we see such a phenomenal rise in Gaullism—even in Britain. Even the new Socialist coalition in Japan believes it has. That's why they are desperately trying to get the U.S. bases off Japanese soil. The Communist Chinese believe it has, and that's why the moderates are openly trying to patch up the quarrel with Moscow. (Personally, I don't think they'll succeed.) And the Russians believe it has, and that's why I predict we're going to see a dramatic rise of Young Turks—or rather, young hawks—in the Kremlin. I'll go even further. The chances that Kosygin and Brezhnev will be in power this time next year are probably no better than one in four."

The Kremlin, May 12, 1968

As things turned out, Kahn was remarkably close to the mark. In the months following the Arab victory, the political situation inside the Soviet Union underwent a dramatic transformation. Alexander Shelepin, the hard-lining former KGB chief who had argued from the outset in favor of a militant policy in the Middle East, swiftly regained his influence in the

Politburo. Crisscrossing the vast country by train and plane, Shelepin delivered countless speeches to local party meetings. "The Americans," Shelepin told the Kharkov municipal Communist party committee, "suffered a decisive blow in the Middle East. It is clear that they are divided and torn. Their ruling circles have never recovered from the resignation of President Johnson seven months after the war. His successor, Hubert Humphrey, is unable to rally the masses. Yet despite all this, the USSR continues to pursue a policy of timidity and unwarranted caution. Our present leadership has permitted the Americans to invade the sacred territory of the Democratic Republic of [North] Vietnam. Surely the time has come for us to teach the imperialists another lesson."

But although Shelepin and his fellow hawks grew more militant by the day, they did not go unchallenged. Indeed, in the weeks after Premier Alexei Kosygin returned from the New York summit, the Russian doves rallied around his standard. Mikhail Andreevich Suslov left his sickbed to berate Shelepin during a stormy Politburo meeting for his "dangerous adventurism." And in private, Suslov confided to Defense Minister Andrei Grechko: "What our comrades in the Komsomol group have failed to realize is that Soviet arms won a Pyrrhic victory last June in the Middle East. Just as I predicted, Nasser has taken his cue from Tito and treats us with an independence bordering on arrogant contempt. Yet I'm afraid that the taste of blood has corrupted the good sense of some of our esteemed comrades. Surely you must agree with me that the Americans are not going to let us bully them around."

But Grechko and his General Staff were not so sure at all. Defensive by training and inclination, the Soviet military establishment was caught on the horns of a dilemma: like the doves, the Red Army leaders feared that another confrontation with the United States might lead to a nuclear showdown; but like the hawks, they were tempted by the exhilarating example of the June war to believe that Washington had lost its nerve and could be made to back down again. What made Grechko's position all the more delicate was the knowledge that a word

from him could tip the balance in favor of either the hawks or doves.

As the first anniversary of the war approached, political tensions in Moscow soared. By late April, the U.S. Expeditionary Force-North, under the leadership of General Creighton W. Abrams, had pushed up the North Vietnamese panhandle to the southern outskirts of Thanhhoa, less than 100 miles south of Hanoi. On April 27, China's Premier Chou En-lai received a joint delegation of Communist leaders from Japan and North Korea and told them that Peking would be willing to permit the Russians to station jet fighters in southwestern China along the border of North Vietnam. And on April 30, President Ho Chi Minh broadcast an appeal from his secret underground headquarters near Dienbienphu, calling on Moscow and Peking for "volunteers."

In the first week of May, Leonid Brezhnev wrote Alexei Kosygin a terse memo:

ALEXEI NIKOLAYEVICH:

I write you on this solemn occasion to apprise you of certain conclusions to which I have come over the past few weeks. First, I would respectfully request that you inform Comrade Ho Chi Minh that his appeal will not go unanswered. Second, please order our representatives in Peking to arrange at the earliest possible moment a meeting with the Chinese government representatives in order to discuss ways in which we can better cooperate in joint defense measures on behalf of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Third, please order Marshal Grechko to put into effect a second-degree alert of our defensive missile force.

Respectfully,
L. BREZHNEV

Kosygin was shocked. For the first time since he and Brezhnev had formed their duumvirate five years before, Brezhnev had ignored the concept of collective leadership, stepped out of his role as party chief and given Kosygin orders—not simply advice—about governmental matters. More important yet,

without bothering to consult Kosygin, Brezhnev had suddenly thrown his weight on the side of the hawks. Obviously Brezhnev was trying to save his political skin, and Kosygin did not know what worried him more—his own political future or the fate of the Soviet Union.

Wasting no time, Kosygin picked up the gray telephone on the table beside his desk and put in a call to Defense Minister Grechko.

“Grechko,” he said, “there is little time, so I will come directly to the point. Leonid Ilyich has given in to Alexander Nikolayevich [Shelepin] and the Komsomol group. He wants me to order a second-degree missile alert. This is madness. Grechko, you must make a firm stand.”

On the other end of the telephone connection, Grechko’s voice sounded calm and composed. “Yes,” he said, “I have heard about the order from Dmitri Stepanovich [Polyansky].”

“That opportunist!” Kosygin shot back with contempt.

“Dmitri Stepanovich,” Grechko said, “knows how to survive.”

“Dmitri Stepanovich,” Kosygin replied, “may know how to survive, but the Soviet Union may perish if this madness is permitted to go unchecked. Grechko, I appeal to you as a soldier and as a great patriot. Go with me to Leonid Ilyich and help me convince him that any provocative moves we might make over Vietnam will be more than matched by the United States.”

“I am not so certain of that,” Grechko said.

“Do you seriously believe that Humphrey will back down?” Kosygin asked.

“I cannot answer that, either,” Grechko said.

In the end, Kosygin was unable to get Grechko to make up his mind. Desperately he turned to Mikhail Suslov and President Nikolai Podgorny. The three men agreed to meet the next morning in Kosygin’s paneled office. But when the appointed hour came, only Suslov, looking sickly pale, showed up to meet Kosygin. Podgorny sent a note saying he was indisposed with the grippe.

“Spring colds,” Suslov observed wryly, “have a way of lasting a long time.”

While Kosygin and Suslov tried to line up support among the moderates, Brezhnev methodically marshaled his own forces. Unable to compel Kosygin to sign his name to an order putting the missiles on a second-degree alert, Brezhnev sought to undercut Kosygin's political position by aggravating tensions with the United States. He called in General Nikolai Ivanovich Krylov, the chief of the Soviet missile force, and persuaded him to make a saber-rattling speech. "The Soviet Union," declared General Krylov in a statement clearly aimed at intimidating the United States, "has perfected an antimissile defense system capable of destroying in its entirety even the most massive strike launched by a potential aggressor." Brezhnev had Yuri Andropov, the chief of the KGB, leak word through the Swiss that the Soviets had also successfully developed a Fractional Orbital Ballistics System capable of dropping bombs—both conventional and nuclear—from a space station on a target anywhere in the world. And when none of this had the desired effect on the stubborn Kosygin, Brezhnev scheduled a special meeting of the Central Committee, the highest decision-making body of the Soviet Communist party, for May 12.

By now, in fact, Brezhnev had made a momentous decision. As he told Shelepin and Andropov in mid-May: "Kosygin must go." But Brezhnev knew that this move was bound to be unpopular among the 195 voting members of the Central Committee, most of whom would understandably fear that Kosygin's removal might signal the beginning of a return to one-man dictatorial rule in the Soviet Union. Accordingly, Brezhnev spread the word to members of the Central Committee that there would be a replacement for Kosygin. Shrewdly, however, he did not name the man he had in mind, thus encouraging his more ambitious colleagues to think that they themselves might be tapped for the Premiership.

As the day of the crucial meeting approached, Brezhnev and Shelepin mapped their strategy. According to Shelepin's aides, 146 Central Committee members could be counted on to vote in favor of Kosygin's ouster—and whatever other proposal Brezhnev might make. Of the remaining 49 members, said

Shelepin, all but one or two would come around after hearing Brezhnev speak.

“As a matter of fact,” said Brezhnev, “I have decided to let *you* make the major address. You had better get used to the public forum, since you are going to be the next Premier.”

Shelepin could not hold back a broad grin. He was on the verge of thanking Brezhnev for the honor, then thought better of it. Those who are grateful, he reflected, are often the most indebted.

“Well,” Shelepin said, “this is quite unexpected, quite unexpected. Fortunately I have asked Marshal [Vasili Danilovich] Sokolovsky [the chief of the Soviet General Staff and the Kremlin’s equivalent of Herman Kahn] to draw up a report explaining where our past policies have gone wrong and suggesting appropriate remedies. I would strongly suggest that we could incorporate some of Sokolovsky’s arguments in the indictment of Kosygin.”

“I would like to see that report,” Brezhnev said.

“I will send it over to you by messenger today,” Shelepin replied.

That night, before he went to sleep, Brezhnev opened a manila envelope stamped “CEKPETr” and read the Sokolovsky report. One excerpt:

If I know my Americans, they can be made to back down in Vietnam. President Humphrey is not any more popular with the masses than was his predecessor, Johnson. His recent decision to deploy another 217,000 troops to Vietnam, bringing the total American manpower commitment there to 1,070,000, will necessitate another sizable call-up of American reservists and the introduction of further economic control measures. If, as we have good reason to believe, the American Congress refuses to act on the economic controls, Humphrey will be in the highly embarrassing political position of having to cancel plans to deploy those 217,000 troops—or of having to go ahead with a war he can clearly no longer afford. In any case, he is in a vulnerable position. However, a direct military challenge from us might have the

effect of winning him back a good deal of support. On the other hand, if we coupled a credible threat—such as a clear hint that we were sending volunteers to Vietnam—with an offer to negotiate a solution to the war, this might undermine Humphrey's position altogether. Whether Humphrey liked it or not, the pressure in America would be immense to accept our offer and negotiate a way out of Vietnam. Naturally an American withdrawal from North Vietnam would appear to most of the world as a great Soviet victory, and it would go a long way toward freezing the *status quo* in Eastern Europe.* Moreover, it would be a victory which we can achieve with a minimum of risk; for if Humphrey does not respond to our offer to negotiate, we do not have to send volunteers. After all, we would only hint . . .

On the morning of May 12, a full-dress meeting of the Central Committee was convened in the modern glass and metal Congress Hall on the Kremlin grounds. Seated in front of a huge tapestry of Lenin's profile were the members of the Politburo, including Alexei Kosygin. Looking even sadder-faced than usual, Kosygin kept his eyes fixed on his hands, which were folded on the table before him. His one remaining loyal supporter, Mikhail Suslov, had been taken to the hospital the night before, complaining of severe pains in his kidney.

In a vitriolic speech that made even the more hawkish members of the Central Committee squirm in their seats, Shelepin

* The Soviet "victory" in the Middle East had already paid dividends in East Europe. In Poland, party boss Wladyslaw Gomulka, staunchly pro-Soviet, purged General Mieczyslaw Moczar and many of his ultranationalist supporters. In Rumania, former Interior Minister Alexandru Draghici ousted President Nicolae Ceaușescu, one of the leading mavericks in the Communist bloc, and put the country back into the Soviet orbit. In Czechoslovakia, Moscow loyalist Antonín Novotny, who had been deposed by liberal Alexander Dubček, made an unsuccessful bid to return to power. Blocked in his ambitions, Novotny publicly asked the Russians to send in Soviet units stationed in Poland, Hungary and East Germany. Within hours, the wire services were full of reports of troop movements in southern Poland and northern Hungary. With that, Dubček and his followers lost their nerve. Anxious at all costs to avoid "another Budapest," they compromised with Novotny and reinstated him as President on the understanding that he would clamp down on political—but not on economic—reforms.

excoriated Kosygin for not following up the victory in the Middle East and for displaying “craven cowardice in the face of the aggressive acts of the United States imperialists.” It was a virtuoso performance, lasting for more than six hours, and when he was finished, Shelepin had not only demolished the career of Alexei Kosygin, but he had also called for the ouster of Suslov and Grechko. (When his name was mentioned, Grechko flushed a deep shade of crimson, but he managed to remain ramrod stiff in his seat.)

As Shelepin sat down and Brezhnev took his place at the speaker’s podium, the members of the Central Committee burst into prolonged applause. Then Brezhnev nominated his choices to fill the new vacancies in the Soviet hierarchy: Shelepin to replace Kosygin; Marshal Ivan Jakubovsky, the commander of the Warsaw Pact forces, to replace Grechko; and KGB chief Yuri Andropov to take Suslov’s place on the Politburo. That out of the way, Brezhnev called upon the Central Committee to approve a series of severe measures on Vietnam—including a second-degree missile alert, the dispatch of seven missile-firing submarines to the South China Sea, the call-up of “volunteers” to fight in North Vietnam if necessary, and the transfer of four wings of Sukhoi-7 tactical bombers to the Nanning airfield in southwest China.

At 4:08 P.M., Shelepin formally moved that a single vote be taken on all the measures that had been brought that day before the Central Committee. No one objected. And as a sea of hands mechanically shot up throughout the auditorium, Kosygin looked around, paused for a moment, then voted for his own political demise.

Cairo, June 2, 1968

Like most well-to-do Egyptians, Gamal Abdel Nasser and his wife, Tahia, had moved their household to Alexandria to escape the steamy Cairo summer. For the past two weeks, they had enjoyed a pleasant life: breakfast with their children in the garden, afternoon cruises in the Mediterranean and intimate suppers with their friends at night. But now, all that was

being interrupted because Nasser had to return to the capital for a meeting with King Faisal of Saudi Arabia.

"Must you really go?" Tahia asked.

"I'm afraid I must," Nasser replied.

"The children are going to miss you," she said. "You promised them you would make a cruise to Port Said."

Nasser smiled and put his arm around his wife's shoulders. "There will be time when I return," he assured her.

"Then you won't be gone long?" she said hopefully.

"Faisal will be no trouble," he said. "I can deal with him in a couple of days at the most."

As he drove to a nearby heliport for the flight to Cairo, the Egyptian President reflected that he had good reason to feel confident. After all, Faisal, once a dangerous arch-rival for power in the Middle East, had practically begged him for the meeting. And according to Egypt's intelligence chief, Salah Nasr (who was no relation to the President), Faisal was coming with a tempting bagful of political concessions. Among other things, the pragmatic Saudi Arabian monarch was apparently prepared to offer Nasser control of Yemen, Aden and the South Arabian Federation if, in turn, Nasser would consent to keep his hands off the rest of the Arabian peninsula—and especially the oil-rich gulf sheikhdoms. Quite clearly, Faisal was a very nervous king.

Faisal's mood was a direct reflection of the dramatic shift that had occurred in Middle Eastern politics since the defeat of Israel. In the eyes of the Arab masses—including the six million who lived in Saudi Arabia itself—the long-dreamed-of "liberation of the usurped homeland" had been the triumph of but one man: Gamal Abdel Nasser. Even now, twelve months after that historic victory, Arab mobs from Algiers to Baghdad were still marching through the streets chanting, "Nass-er, Nass-er, Nass-er." And virtually every Arab leader had found himself forced to come to terms with local Nasserite groups—or pay the consequences for his stubborn refusal to accept the political facts of life.

In North Africa, for example, Morocco's King Hassan had appointed Abderrahim Bouabid, the leader of the left-wing

National Union of Popular Forces, Prime Minister of a new government that included many Nasserite politicians. Political upheavals tilted the regimes of Algeria and Libya toward a pro-Cairo line. And President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia, a staunch friend of the United States, resigned after narrowly escaping assassination.

Lebanon's Christian Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Emile Bustani, was not so lucky. Six weeks after the end of the war, an assassin put a bullet through the back of his head. In the wake of Bustani's death, thousands of Moslems (and some radical Christians as well) demonstrated in the streets of Beirut in favor of joining Nasser's United Arab Republic. When this was opposed by conservative Christian groups, widespread street fighting broke out and Lebanon was plunged into a full-scale civil war. At first, Prime Minister Rashid Karami, a devout Moslem, thought he could bring the internecine fighting under control by declaring martial law and clamping the Christian leaders in jail. But when this failed, Karami's advisers urged him to call on Nasser to send Egyptian troops to restore order. "The moment the first Egyptian soldier sets foot on Lebanese soil," Karami protested, "our independence will be a thing of the past." Two days later, one of the Prime Minister's closest aides attempted to poison him. At that, Karami asked Nasser to dispatch the troops. And just as he had predicted, within a matter of weeks Lebanon had become a member of the United Arab Republic.

The Lebanese found themselves in strange company. In Syria, a clique of army colonels had overthrown the ruling Baathist regime and murdered President Nureddin Atassi. (The assassins just missed the strong man behind Atassi, Major General Salah Jadid; he fled to France.) Quickly, thereafter, the new Syrian rulers petitioned for membership in the United Arab Republic. Iraq's President Abdel Rahman Aref, seeing the handwriting on the wall, did not wait for a coup before he made his move. Flying off to Cairo, Aref informed Nasser that the Iraqi government had been reshuffled to make room for pro-Egyptian politicians and was now ready to take its place beside Lebanon and Syria in the UAR.

Thus, by the first weeks of 1968, all of Nasser's closest neighbors were safely within the fold—all, that is, except Jordan. There, despite the rising tide of pro-Nasser sentiment, King Hussein desperately fought to preserve his independence. Loyal army units were sent into Jerusalem to clear the Old City's walls of handbills (printed in Egypt) calling for Hussein's ouster. Pro-Nasser demonstrations in the West Bank cities of Nablus and Jenin were crushed by tough Legionnaires wielding truncheons and tear-gas guns. And in a show of personal courage, Hussein announced that he would attend Friday prayers at Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock Mosque—the very place where his grandfather, King Abdullah, was assassinated in front of his eyes sixteen years before.

Surrounded by Bedouin bodyguards, Hussein arrived in a bulletproof Rolls-Royce at the appointed hour. He paused to wave at the assembled crowds, then strode briskly across the cobblestoned courtyard toward the holy compound of the mosque. Just as he was entering, a woman nearby fainted. Hussein turned to see what had happened. Standing stock-still for two or three seconds, he presented a perfect target. A single shot from a high-powered rifle crackled out from the roof of one of the mosque's towers. Hussein clutched the sides of his head, then crumpled slowly to the ground—dead.

In the confusion following Hussein's assassination, his older—and slightly eccentric—brother, Mohammed, assumed the throne. But within a week, he was forced to abdicate and flee the country with the royal family (including Hussein's pregnant British wife, the former Toni Avril Gardiner, and her two sons, Prince Abdullah, six, and Prince Faisal, four). In his place, a coalition of Jordanian officers, Nasserite politicians and El Fatah chieftains proclaimed the formation of the "People's Republic of Jordan." And in June, 1968—the first anniversary of the war against Israel—the new Jordanian government formally ratified the Articles of Confederation of the United Arab Republic.

Now Nasser was about to crown all these achievements with a face-to-face meeting with King Faisal. He had assembled his closest aides—Field Marshal Abdel Hakim Amer, Zakaraya

Mohieddin and Aly Sabry—at Cairo’s resplendent Kubbeh Palace to receive the Saudi Arabian monarch. All four men were in a festive mood. “This year,” the irreverent Sabry quipped, “there is no need for an Arab to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. The pilgrim from Mecca is coming to us.”

At precisely one thirty, Faisal—elegant in his flowing robes and gold-banded *keffiyeh*—was ushered into the chandeliered chamber. Nasser stepped forward and caught the bearded king in a warm embrace.

“Of course,” said Nasser, “you know my brothers.” And one by one, Amer, Mohieddin and Sabry greeted the monarch.

Pomegranates and tea were brought in by black Sudanese servants, and the leaders exchanged pleasantries about the weather and their families. Then the servants appeared again, but this time with only two cups of Turkish coffee. At that, Amer, Mohieddin and Sabry stood up, made some polite excuses and left the two leaders to themselves.

After some more polite talk, Faisal got down to business. Just as Nasser thought, Aden and the South Arabian Federation were his for the asking. But Faisal wanted an ironclad guarantee in return that Nasser would put an end to his subversive activities in the oil sheikhdoms along the Persian Gulf.

“My brother speaks openly,” said Nasser, “so I will honor him with the same candor. I can assure you that you have nothing to fear from the members of the United Arab Republic. But unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the designing ambitions of your Persian neighbors. I have conclusive evidence that the shah [Mohammed Reza Pahlevi of Iran] is doing all in his power to take advantage of the present unstable circumstances to extend his power in the gulf.”

“What proof?” Faisal asked.

Nasser took a sheaf of papers from a desk drawer.

“This,” he said and handed the papers to Faisal.

Grim-faced, Faisal began reading a report that Nasser had ordered prepared for just this occasion. In it, Nasser’s intelligence experts had concocted a picture of extensive Iranian underground activities in the Persian Gulf. And toward the end of the report, at a point where Nasser believed Faisal would be

susceptible to the charge, was a detailed account of a Persian plot to assassinate the Saudi Arabian ruler.

"If this is true . . ." Faisal sputtered.

"By all means, have your own intelligence confirm what we have found," Nasser said.

"I intend to," Faisal replied.

"Good," said Nasser. "And you will see that the shah, despite all that has transpired over the past year, is still nothing more than a lackey of the West. He alone, it would seem, has ignored the historic meaning of our supreme victory over the Zionist usurpers. There is no longer any place in the lands of Arabia for carriers of the foreign virus. There is no longer any place for those who would plot against their Arab brothers. Arab must band together with Arab. We must be strong and united. That is the whole purpose of the United Arab Republic."

"And is there room in your United Arab Republic for an Arab king?" Faisal asked.

"For a king, yes," said Nasser. "For a shah, no."

Los Angeles, June 5, 1968

Eighty-one days through the primary campaign, his fingers were painfully swollen from the grasp of a thousand handshakes, his forearms were scratched raw from the clutching embrace of ten thousand faceless admirers, his body was black and blue from the press of countless hysterical throngs. But the bruise on his forehead was new. That morning, while surfing at the Malibu Beach home of movie director John Frankenheimer, the Senator's twelve-year-old son, David, had been caught in a strong undertow. Plunging into the water to save the boy, Robert Francis Kennedy had bumped his head on a rock.

As he watched the early returns of the California primary on Frankenheimer's television set, Ethel Kennedy applied an anti-septic paste to her husband's injury. Already, in the first hour after the polls closed, the computers on all three major networks were predicting a Kennedy victory.

“Let’s go to the hotel,” Jesse Unruh, the speaker of the California state assembly, said.

“Do we know enough about it yet?” Kennedy asked.

“Oh, yeah,” Unruh said, “there’s no doubt about it. It’s a landslide.”

The long climb to California had set off a whole chain of such landslides. As a veteran of his brother’s fist-and-glove struggle for the Democratic Presidential nomination eight years before, Robert Kennedy had at first braced himself for another hard haul. But the Middle East war shattered this calculation by wrenching the American political scene completely out of joint. From the outset, Kennedy’s only real competition in the Democratic party came from President Hubert Horatio Humphrey. (An early bid by Senator Eugene McCarthy, an avowed peace candidate, was a casualty of the Mideast war.) As hard as Humphrey tried, however, he was unable to cleanse himself of the stain of having belonged to the Johnson Administration. Wherever he campaigned, he was haunted by Johnson’s failure to intervene on behalf of Israel. Kennedy, on the other hand, found himself on the popular side of the two most important issues in America: he was an outspoken critic of both the escalating war in Vietnam and the humiliating U.S. defeat in the Middle East. And despite the sniping from political pundits, he was able to maintain this seemingly contradictory stance of being a dove on Vietnam and a hawk on Israel.

“It’s time we faced up to the limitations of power,” he said in a taped campaign speech that was televised over and over again throughout the country. “I think America should scale back in Vietnam. I think America can use its military power more effectively. We want to use our power for important things. And Israel is an important thing. If I am elected President, I will examine every conceivable avenue to restore sovereignty to Israel—up to and including the use of force.”

The political tightrope act was an enormous success. Burdened with the new duties of office, Humphrey rarely sallied out of Washington (the Secret Service warned him of the dangers of making speeches before large crowds), while Kennedy crisscrossed the country in a relentless assault on delegates to

the Democratic convention. Any thought that the Democratic nomination might turn into a real contest was laid to rest during the New Hampshire primary, when Kennedy personally stumped the state and trounced Humphrey by garnering 67 percent of the vote. Once the results from New Hampshire were in, every major politician in the country conceded the Democratic nomination to Kennedy. After that, the forty-two-year-old Senator cut back on his campaigning in other primaries, limiting himself to three personal appearances in Wisconsin, three in Nebraska and only one in Oregon. By the time the California primary rolled around in early June, Kennedy had more than enough delegate strength to put him over the top at the convention. California, which had once appeared to hold the passkey to the nomination, suddenly seemed superfluous, and Robert Kennedy entered the state only two days before the balloting.

Now nearly midnight on a sultry June evening, the candidate, trailed by his wife and his bodyguard—a tall ex-FBI agent named Bill Barry—stepped into an elevator at the Ambassador Hotel and rode up to his fifth-floor “royal suite.” The victory celebration was already in full swing and the entire floor was aswarm with politicians, campaign workers, celebrities and the usual sprinkling of attractive women. Two towering Negroes—pro football player Roosevelt Grier and Olympic decathlon champion Rafer Johnson—cleared a path through the riotous crowd.

“He’s here,” someone shouted.

An outstretched hand grabbed Kennedy’s jacket.

“Bob, congratulations,” Milton Berle said. “Really, it’s just great.”

John Glenn, the former astronaut, and Bud Schulberg, the Hollywood scriptwriter, smiled as Kennedy walked by. Nodding, shaking hands, muttering, “Thank you, thank you so much,” Kennedy made his way to his bedroom. It, too, was jammed with the noisy celebration.

“Where’s Ted and Dick?” Kennedy asked Rosey Grier.

“I think they’re in there,” Grier said.

Sidling through the closely packed bodies, Kennedy inched

his way toward the bathroom. He opened the door and found Ted Sorensen and Richard Goodwin sitting on the edge of the bathtub. On the tiled floor lay a copy of the *New York Daily News*. The front-page headline proclaimed: "Chicom Troops Invade N. Vietnam."

Kennedy ignored the newspaper and the glum expressions on the faces of his speech writers.

"As George Bernard Shaw once said," he quipped in a parody of a quotation he had used throughout the campaign, "anybody who would sit in a bathroom to write the draft of a speech has got to be nuts."

Sorensen smiled. But Goodwin, a dark, intense, bushy-browed man, only puffed harder on his cigar.

"If this keeps up," Goodwin said, motioning to the newspaper, "we ought to give the nomination back to Hubert on a silver platter."

"How many troops did the Chinese send in?" Kennedy asked.

"Nobody knows yet," Sorensen said. "Probably more than a hundred thousand."

"Complicates things, doesn't it?" Kennedy said.

"That's putting it mildly," Goodwin observed.

"Well, it just proves what we've been saying all along," Sorensen said. "There's no such thing as a limited commitment. Either you go in open-ended or you shouldn't go in at all."

There was a knock on the door. Jesse Unruh poked in his head.

"Hubert's conceded," he said, a big smile lighting up his face. "Let's go down to the ballroom."

"I'll be out in a sec, Jess," Kennedy said.

"Right. Listen, with South Dakota today, somebody mentioned to me that makes it six wins in a row. Drysdale got his sixth shutout today. Just thought I'd mention it."

"Thanks, Jess. I'll be right with you."

Goodwin scribbled something with his pen on a piece of paper and showed it to Sorensen.

"Okay, I'm going to go down," Kennedy said to the two men. "What do you have?"

"Well, the Drysdale thing might not be a bad opener," Good-

win said. He handed Kennedy the piece of paper. "Here's a list of the credits."

Kennedy glanced down at the paper.

Drysdale—6 straight—
Jess
Cesar Chavez—Rafer Johnson
Friends in black communities
Paul Schrade—labor vote
Agricultural vote, cities—
Suburbs—John Glenn
South Dakota—50 counties
to 3 for HHH

Overwhelming for change—
HHH prisoner of present policy

Chinese entry—not too late to
scale down—negotiate

With that list of people to thank and themes to strike tucked in his breast pocket, Kennedy made his way back through the noisy, crowded hotel suite in search of his wife. He found her in the living room, surrounded by an admiring circle of giggling girls dressed in straw campaign hats and white skirts.

"Where's Bill?" he asked her.

"Right behind you," a baritone voice said.

Kennedy turned around and saw that Bill Barry, his bodyguard, was indeed standing directly behind him.

"Okay," Kennedy said, "let's go down."

With Rosey Grier and Rafer Johnson clearing the way, the candidate, his wife, his bodyguard, his two speech writers and his campaign manager, brother-in-law Stephen Smith, left the party, piled into a dirty service elevator and descended the five stories to the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel. There he signed three autographs on the backs of menus, strolled through a dank, malodorous corridor and emerged from a set of gold curtains into the hotel's main ballroom.

The crowd roared. It was a deafening, delirious ovation that rolled on and on and on, and Robert Kennedy just stood there, his arms at his sides, an enigmatic smile playing at the corners of his mouth, his eye darting from face to face in an unspoken thank you. Three times he tried to subdue the crowd by leaning over the battery of microphones and beginning to talk. But each time the applause and shouts and whistles crescendoed even louder. Finally Stephen Smith stepped forward and raised both his hands. Gradually the densely packed ballroom began to quiet.

Kennedy took out the slip of paper on which Sorensen and Goodwin had scribbled his cues and laid it on the podium.

“First of all,” he said, “I want to thank Steve Smith, who’s ruthless but effective, for making you stop. For a while, I thought we’d all be standing here in the Ambassador Hotel until August in Chicago. I don’t want to be late for the convention.”

The crowd broke into a laugh, then applause.

For the next twenty minutes, Kennedy paid off his political debts by thanking, each in his turn, the men who had helped him win in California. Then he reminded his listeners that he would be returning during the Presidential campaign itself to ask for their help “so that America can have a better foreign policy and so that we can end the division within the United States. What I think is quite clear is that we can work together. We are a great country, a selfless and a compassionate country. We can do better. We *will* do better. So my thanks to all of you, and on to Chicago.”

Once again, the crowd bellowed its approval.

Kennedy turned to Bill Barry.

“I don’t want to have to go through this mob scene, Bill,” he said. “Let’s duck out through the curtains the way we came.”

“We haven’t checked out the kitchen,” Barry protested. “I think it’d be better to go out front.”

“It’s all right,” Kennedy said and, without waiting, waved to the crowd for the last time and ducked through the curtains. A small knot of people had gathered in front of the swinging

doors of the pantry. The assistant maître d'hôtel, Karl Uecker, came forward.

"I'd be happy to show you the quickest way out," Uecker said.

"That's okay," Kennedy said.

With his campaign aides, reporters, photographers and curious onlookers pushing and shoving behind him, Kennedy walked slowly into the pantry to thank the kitchen staff for its service. Shuffling past a bank of aluminum food warmers, he shook hands with the white-hatted chefs, the uniformed waiters, the busboys and the dishwashers. Then he retraced his steps.

"Boy, it's hot in here," he said to Karl Uecker.

"I can show you the way out," Uecker said.

Kennedy looked over his shoulder and saw Ethel's head bobbing in the swirling mass of people.

"Hey, Ethel," he shouted, "let's go."

Then he nodded to Uecker and, waving over his shoulder to the crowd, followed the assistant maître d'hôtel out of the stuffy pantry of the Ambassador Hotel.

Occupation

There was enough of the old Socialist still left in Suleiman Nabulsi to make him feel smug riding in the back seat of an air-conditioned Cadillac. Scarcely six weeks before, Nabulsi, one of Jordan's many ex-Premiers, had emerged from a decade of obscurity to oust the cabal of colonels that had ruled his country since shortly after the assassination of King Hussein. His rise to power had been so sudden that even the clothes on his back were brand new. Now, riding through the streets of Cairo, the new head of the People's Republic of Jordan frowned at the man sitting beside him.

"General," Nabulsi said, "could I trouble you to put out your cigar?"

General Abou Assaly, the military strong man of Syria, hesitated.

"Ever since I was a child," Nabulsi explained a bit apologetically, "cigar smoke in a closed space has nauseated me."

Assaly took a last puff, methodically ground out the cigar in an ashtray and turned back to his newspaper.

Nabulsi wondered if he had offended the general and tried to strike up a conversation.

"What effect do you think Robert Kennedy's nomination will have on our gathering today?"

Assaly slipped off his prescription sunglasses and, for the first time, sized up the slightly foppish-looking Jordanian. A born intriguer, the general wondered how far he should go. Pressing a button, he raised the soundproof glass partition behind the chauffeur.

“A more important question,” he said with studied casualness, “is what effect Gamal Nasser will have on this summit.”

Nabulsi grasped the point immediately. “I suppose,” he said, “the answer is in your newspaper. If you can believe our friend Heykal [the editor of *Al Ahram* and Nasser’s unofficial spokesman], Nasser has already divided the pie. You saw the map, of course?”

Assaly moistened his thumb with his tongue and flipped his newspaper to page 2. “It’s a well-drawn map,” he said sarcastically, “no question. But I see that you Jordanians will still have a long walk to the Mediterranean.”

Nabulsi fingered the paper on the seat. “Yes, but you Syrians are not doing much better. All those refineries north of Haifa will be sending oil to Cairo, not Damascus.”

The two men sat in silence as the limousine slid to a stop at a checkpoint on the fringe of the Manchiet el Bakri district. A uniformed Egyptian officer peered through the tinted window, instantly recognized the occupants and motioned the car through.

“Listen, my friend,” the general said, “we’ll be there in a few minutes. Let us be candid with each other. You and I wouldn’t be where we are today if it hadn’t been for Gamal Nasser. The Arab nation will always be in his debt. But Nasser is an Egyptian. And what he does, he does for Egypt. Two weeks ago, he forced me to turn down a very attractive offer from West Germany—long-term credits, the whole thing. Instead, he’s demanding that I barter with the Russians. On top of that, now Nasser wants all the plums from Palestine for himself.” Assaly was speaking almost in a whisper. “Frankly, I know all about your contacts with Washington. And if I know about them, Nasser must know about them, too. You’re going to run into the same trouble I ran into.” He paused. “You and I have much to talk about.”

As the Cadillac passed through the wrought-iron gates of Nasser’s villa at the edge of the desert, the two men were still huddled in conversation. And they continued talking as they walked past the tennis court, past the stone building housing Nasser’s library, and entered the house.

The Arab summit on the partition of Israel had originally been scheduled for July, 1967. But every time Nasser's anxious allies pressed for a meeting, the Egyptian leader found another excuse for putting it off. First, there were the *kibbutzim*. Months after the end of the war, many of Israel's 230 communal farm settlements had yet to be pacified. And until they were, Nasser argued, a final political solution had to wait.

By February, 1968, after eight long months of brutal suppression, the last of the *kibbutzim* had been disbanded. But when Arab newspapers throughout the Middle East again called for a summit, Nasser unveiled a new delaying tactic. This time it was public opinion. Some of Nasser's closest colleagues in the nonaligned world—including Yugoslavia's Josip Broz Tito and India's Indira Gandhi—personally cautioned him that, with the United Nations debate on Palestine still in full swing, he would lose crucial diplomatic support if he carved up Israel too soon.* Since he was in no rush anyhow, Nasser was only too willing to heed the advice. "Be patient," he wrote in a diplomatic note to all the Arab heads of state. "In time, the world will forget the Jews just as it once forgot the Palestinian refugees."

Behind the smoke screen of excuses, however, lay Nasser's real reason: his burning desire to consolidate his position in the Middle East before sitting down at the bargaining table with his allies. And initially, he scored impressive successes. The Arab victory over Israel had been universally interpreted as a personal triumph for the Egyptian leader, and Nasser easily converted this popularity into power. For a time, his obsessive dream—to unite the Arab family of nations under his leadership—seemed well on its way toward becoming reality. But as the months wore on, Nasser found it increasingly difficult to keep men he himself had put in power—such as Suleiman Nabulsi and Abou Assaly—in line. Without the threat of a powerful Israel to rally the Arabs, it seemed, Arab unity was as ephemeral as ever. Political pragmatist that he was, Nasser calculated that

* The UN debate never got very far. Hopelessly bogged down for months, the international body was unable to come up with any form of compromise motion regarding the withdrawal of Arab troops from Israel.

it was time to settle the "Jewish matter" while he still had some semblance of control. And in September, 1968, he summoned the Arab chieftains to Cairo.

Standing in front of a black marble fireplace in the salon of his villa, Nasser chatted amiably with Lebanon's Prime Minister Rashid Karami and Iraq's dark, mustachioed President Abdel Rahman Aref. Karami threaded his amber *masbaha* (a string of worry beads) as he struggled through an involved off-color anecdote about one of his younger ambassadors. Nasser feigned amusement, grunting and nodding periodically. But he was much more interested in what was going on across the room. There, the leaders of Jordan and Syria had just spotted a large map of Israel resting on an easel.

"Brothers," Nasser said, cutting off Karami before the punch line, "I thought it would be more pleasant to conduct our business in the informal atmosphere of my home. The map that our friends are so absorbed in may be familiar to some of you. It was unfortunately released to the press by an oversight. No difference."

Expressionlessly Nabulsi and Assaly turned away from the chart and sat down in gilded imitation Louis XIV chairs.

Nasser leaned an elbow on the mantel of the fireplace. "I propose that we begin arranging the temporary dismemberment of Palestine," he said quietly. "I suppose I should emphasize the word *temporary* because I feel certain that all of us here agree that at some future date, when Palestine has been effectively pacified, we will turn over control of the territory we occupy to its rightful owners—the Arabs of Palestine." Nasser could barely conceal a smug smile. "Of course, who can say when that day will come? After all, so much depends on just when the Palestinians are able to develop the kind of leadership that can cope with such an important and difficult task."

The other men in the room murmured their approval. Clearly the Palestinians were not going to prove a major stumbling block on the road to their ambitions.

"The borders you see on the map have a lot to recommend them," Nasser went on. "They would require a minimum re-

deployment of occupation troops. They would create easily demarcated frontiers. They would distribute the remaining Jewish population more or less equitably. And most important of all, they would compensate each of us in proportion to our contribution to the victory."

For a long moment no one said a word. Then Nabulsi stood up and walked across the room to the map. "With great respect, Gamal," he said, rapping his knuckles against the easel, "Jordan had hoped for more." He hesitated awkwardly, then raced on. "In the six weeks since the return of civilian government to Jordan, I have spent endless hours studying this matter. Jordan's economy needs a deepwater port on the Mediterranean. It was my understanding that this had all been agreed upon between you and Hussein and that we would get a seven-mile-wide corridor to Haifa. Not to mention Haifa itself."

Before Nasser could answer, Nabulsi continued. "I also notice here on the insert of this map provision for five-power control over the former Jewish sector of Jerusalem. Since we are amongst friends and allies, I tell you frankly: the reunification of the holy city of Jerusalem under Jordanian control is a precondition of any settlement."

Nasser was visibly startled. He had expected some grumbling—but nothing like this. Especially not from a man he had personally put in power.

But there were more surprises in store for him.

Speaking directly from his seat, Syria's Abou Assaly came to the support of Jordan. "With respect to Jerusalem, Gamal, we in Syria would not feel any great loss if we did not have a voice in governing Jewish Jerusalem. Nor would we feel put out if Nabulsi here took over the responsibility for Haifa—a city now controlled by Syrian troops."

Suddenly it dawned on Nasser why Nabulsi had been so outspoken. Quite clearly, Nabulsi and Assaly had compared notes before the meeting. And they weren't being very subtle about it.

Assaly took out a long Havana cigar, clipped the end and lit it. "Syria, too, deserves more." Assaly pointed the tip of his cigar at the map. "The oil refineries north of Haifa," he said,

and shook his head incredulously. "I don't logically see how they ended up in the Egyptian sector."

For the next thirty seconds, the only sound in the room was the hollow click-click of Rashid Karami's worry beads. Finally the Lebanese Prime Minister spoke up. "If I may," he said tentatively.

Nasser nodded.

"I'd like to put a question that may at first offend some of you," Karami began in a barely audible voice. "Why, I ask, are we dividing Palestine at all? Haven't the past fifteen months of occupation taught us anything? Who here can honestly say that his country has benefited from the occupation? I can speak for Lebanon. Although we control a relatively small amount of territory, it has been a heavy burden on us. Quartering a full division there, providing civil administrators, feeding and policing those Jews—all this has put a tremendous drain on our resources."

"Come to the point," Assaly snapped.

"If you'll just bear with me," Karami replied, "I'm coming to my point right now." For the first time since he entered the room, Karami put aside his worry beads. "We fought the Jews because they were a thorn in our side. If we continue to occupy the country, they'll still be a thorn in our side. What I propose is a lasting solution to the problem, one that will not tax our resources. Let us turn Palestine into a viable, independent multinational state in which the Arab population outnumber the Jews—and in which the rights of the majority are forever guaranteed by the United Arab Republic."

Nabulsi's reaction was one of instant outrage. "There is no place on the agenda I received for discussing this treasonous proposal," the Jordanian sputtered. "And anyway, what makes you think the Jews won't dominate, even if they are in a minority?"

Karami smiled; he had anticipated just that sort of question. "We will make the total disarmament of the Jews the basis of the state."

Nasser immediately sensed that he could use Karami's plan as a club with which to beat down the Jordanian and Syrian.

Plunging into the argument, he pretended to take Karami seriously. And as he shrewdly calculated, Nabulsi and Assaly were badly shaken by the thought that they might lose everything if Karami's proposal was accepted. For the next three quarters of an hour, all five men—including Iraq's Aref, who hadn't said a word up to then—crowded around the map, dickering over latitudes and longitudes. Even Karami joined in; once he realized that Nasser was merely toying with him, he argued as ardently as the rest for Lebanon's share. Ultimately Nasser had things pretty much his own way. His only major concession was to drop his scheme for five-power control over the New City of Jerusalem. And at 3:30 on the afternoon of Friday, September 13, 1968, the five Arab leaders initialed a rough draft of the final settlement. Its provisions:

To Egypt fell all of Palestine west of 35 degrees east longitude—an area that included more than half of the Negev, the highly industrialized coastal strip, Tel Aviv and Haifa.

To Jordan fell everything east of 35 degrees east longitude up to 32 degrees 45 minutes north latitude—an area that included the eastern part of the Negev and the Jerusalem Corridor, plus sole control of the reunified city of Jerusalem and “access rights”—but not a corridor—to port facilities in Haifa.

To Syria fell the entire Galilee north of 32 degrees 45 minutes north latitude—an area that included some of the richest farmlands in Palestine.

To Lebanon fell a five-mile-wide coastal strip down to Acre.

To Iraq, as reparations, fell \$27 million worth of Israeli heavy industrial machinery. (The promise went unfulfilled; despite considerable grumbling, Iraq was only able to squeeze \$144,000 worth of Israeli machinery out of its allies in Palestine.)

The stout, balding man fidgeted impatiently with the knobs on the air conditioner, but it did not seem to help. The air being blown into the orange-carpeted room felt just as damp and tepid as before. He cursed Tel Aviv's September heat and ambled back to his desk. Standing on top of a mountainous pile of

papers was a half-empty bottle of Maccabee beer, his fifth of the day. He took a long swig from the bottle, held its coolness against his cheek and belched loudly. Then, rubbing a handkerchief around the neckband of his sticky Egyptian Army uniform, former SS Sturmführer Wilhelm Boekler eased his heavy body into a chair.

After more than seventeen years in the Middle East, Boekler had yet to acclimate himself to its furnacelike heat. Drenched in sweat, he slouched languorously in a seat once reserved for the chief executive of an Israeli architectural firm and allowed his thoughts to wander back to the cool green forests of Bavaria. More than anything else, the memory of those forests had sustained Boekler in the years since he fled Germany—and the Munich War Crimes Tribunal—following World War Two. He was still a wanted man in Germany; as he dimly recalled, the charge against him was “complicity in the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto.” Like the several hundred other former Nazis who had found refuge in Egypt, Boekler knew that he was destined to live out his days away from the fatherland.

Aside from the heat, he had little to complain about. From the moment he arrived in Egypt via the Nazi “underground railroad” that ran through Spain and North Africa, Boekler had been treated royally by the Egyptian authorities. He lived in a comfortable four-room apartment provided for him in the “German colony” at Heliopolis. And since 1952, when he assumed the alias of Colonel Abdel Nah-krim, he had held a well-paying job in the Israeli section of *Mukhabarat el-Amme*, Egypt’s intelligence service.

The job suited the meticulous Boekler to a tee. With a staff of forty Egyptians working directly under him, his primary task was to assemble and keep up to date 15,000 dossiers on the most important Jewish figures in Israel—politicians, businessmen, union leaders, army officers. It had been difficult, painstaking work, and for a time—especially after the devastating Egyptian defeat in 1956—Boekler wondered if the mass of material he had collected would ever be used. His doubts were laid to rest by the Arab victory in June, 1967. Indeed, no sooner had the first Egyptian tanks rolled into Tel Aviv fifteen months ago,

than Boekler—along with twelve other former Nazi officials on Nasser's payroll—was summoned to the Cairo headquarters of *Mukhabarat el-Amme* for a meeting with General Salah Nasr, the chief of intelligence.

As was his custom, Boekler had made notes of that meeting in his private diary. "Nasr arrived 43 minutes late," he had recorded. "Took most important seat at head of table. Informed us that *El Rayis* wanted a detailed administrative plan for the occupation of Israel completed within four days. (Four days! Just like the Egyptians. No planning. Everything has to be improvised.) Nasr said our job will be to act as advisers to the Egyptian occupation authorities. (Advisers, indeed!) Our objectives are twofold: first, to salvage as much as possible of Israel's material wealth and, second, to emasculate as completely as possible the Jewish presence in Palestine. All this to be carried out with utmost discretion on the part of the German advisers. We must remain in the background and use our Arabic names. Nasr distributed carbon copies of our orders around the table. (Smudged carbons at that.) Seems that focus of occupation program will be economic and political pressures. Kept stressing need for finesse. Wants thousands of Jews to leave voluntarily. Expects that by 1973 large sections of Palestine will be *judenrein*."

The plans had been drawn up within the allotted time and quickly accepted by the Egyptian government. Each of the Germans had been assigned a special task, one that suited his field of expertise. For instance, former Gestapo Standartenführer Leopold Gleim, who had helped reorganize the Egyptian Secret Police after his arrival in Cairo in 1955, was made adviser to the occupation authority's Political Police Bureau. Dr. Heinrich Willerman, a former Nazi concentration camp physician, advised the Egyptians on setting up a network of detention camps in Gaza for high-ranking Jewish political prisoners. Hans Appler, a former aide to Goebbels, was attached to an Egyptian unit that took charge of propaganda. Oscar Dirlewanger, a former SS Brigadeführer who had served with Hitler's armies in the Ukraine, worked with a secret unit whose job it was to flush out organized Jewish resistance. And Boekler

himself joined a group called the Palestine Refugee Reparations Board.

On paper, the purpose of the Palestine Refugee Reparations Board was to coordinate Arab property claims against Israelis. But in practice, the board served as the major means by which the Arabs siphoned off Israel's wealth. Upon his arrival in Tel Aviv, Boekler's first assignment was to confiscate all foreign currency and gold held by Israeli citizens and to trace and recover the vast reserves of foreign currency which Cairo believed that the Israelis had cached away in the last desperate hours of the war. Above all, Boekler had instructions to prevent currency from falling into the hands of Jewish resistance groups.

At first, the task seemed all but impossible. Boekler's Egyptian staff was hopelessly inefficient. The Israeli government, as it turned out, had kept almost all of its reserves tucked safely away in banks in New York and Switzerland. But Boekler's luck turned in January, 1968, when a set of files, salvaged from the wreckage of the bombed-out Israeli Ministry of Finance in Jerusalem, revealed the location of more than eight million dollars in currency and negotiable bonds. Most of this Boekler transferred to the coffers in Cairo.

Now, fifteen months after the end of the war, only one crucial link was still missing in the search. According to the salvaged set of files, three hundred thousand dollars in Swiss francs had been deposited in the vaults of the Foreign Trade Bank in Tel Aviv on the very first day of the war. The money was no longer there when the Arabs arrived in Tel Aviv. When Boekler's men finally caught up with the man who presumably knew what had happened to the money—an assistant bank manager named Harry Sapir—he had refused to talk. Three days of round-the-clock interrogation had failed to make Sapir more cooperative. And this morning, Boekler had decided that further delay in extracting the information from Sapir might mean the irrevocable loss of the money to the Jewish underground.

Reaching across his desk, Boekler pressed the buzzer on his intercom. For a moment there was no reply.

"*Arabischer Dummkopf,*" he said and pressed the buzzer two more times.

The voice of his adjutant crackled from the box.

“Yes, Colonel Nah-krim?”

“Najib, send in the major.”

Over the intercom, Boekler heard Najib speak to the man waiting in the outer office.

“The German is ready to see you. You’d better look smart.”

The door opened and a young man, clean-shaven and dressed in a freshly starched uniform, entered. He saluted.

“Major Mohammed Abu Sir, reporting as requested.”

“Ah, yes, Major,” Boekler said, straightening up in his chair. “Come in, come in. Take a seat. Don’t worry about those papers. Put them on the floor. Would you like a beer? It’s cold.”

“No, thank you, sir,” Abu Sir said.

“Well, then, what do you have to report?” Boekler asked. “Has Sapir talked?”

Abu Sir inched to the edge of his chair and looked Boekler directly in the eye. “I’m afraid that we can’t break him. Nothing seems to work.”

“Nothing seems to work,” Boekler repeated. “Well, well.” He picked up the bottle of beer on his desk, saw that it was empty and put it down. “Let me tell you, Major, there is no such thing as a man who can’t be made to talk. Let me tell you, all men can be made to talk. It’s just a matter of how you go about it. You mustn’t be too crude, Major.”

“Yes, sir.”

“I mean to say, Major,” Boekler continued, “that this man Sapir is important to us. You realize, of course, that we must put our hands on that money. It may seem like a trifle to you, Major, but three hundred thousand dollars in Swiss francs can go a long way in an underground organization.”

“Yes, sir. I understand, sir.”

“Well, then, Major, I suggest that you go back to the internment camp at Petah Tikva and have a chat with Mr. Sapir. A friendly chat, you know. You might want to include Mr. Sapir’s wife in your friendly conversation.”

“We’ve tried that, sir,” the Major said:

“You’ve tried that? Well, perhaps you might find it convenient to try it again, you know?”

“Yes, sir.”

“I mean to say, Major, that I expect Sapir to talk today. Not too crude, Major. But today.”

“Yes, sir. I will see to it. Today.”

The small green Russian-built Zaporozhets cruised through the deserted streets of Tel Aviv. It was 7:45 on the Sabbath morning, and the Egyptian 8 P.M.-to-8 A.M. curfew was almost over. The Zaporozhets swung into Gamal Abdel Nasser Boulevard (formerly Ben Yehuda Street). From two oversized loudspeakers on its roof came the echoing sound of an Egyptian civilian speaking in stilted Hebrew. “Occupation Order Number 798. Jews of Tel Aviv. Pursuant to an agreement concluded in Cairo, Tel Aviv has formally been incorporated into the United Arab Republic. Henceforth, all Jews who wish to travel from Egyptian Palestine must obtain written permission. Effective this day, by order of the Governor General of Egyptian Palestine, Munam Abdul Husaini.”

The Zaporozhets turned the corner into June Five Road (formerly Allenby Road). “Occupation Order Number 798. Jews of Tel Aviv. Pursuant to . . .”

Behind the locked shutters of their apartments, the Jews of Tel Aviv paused to listen to the new order, then turned back to their meager breakfasts. By now, one directive more or less hardly seemed to make a difference. For fifteen months of occupation had disfigured the face of Israel beyond recognition, and there seemed little the Arabs could do to make life more painful than it already was for the ordinary Jew.

The ordeal had begun as soon as the war ended. While the corpses of hundreds of Israelis still rotted on the streets, tens of thousands of occupation troops flooded into the Jewish cities and towns. In the first flush of victory, nothing less than an orgy of looting and bloodshed would satisfy the Arab conquerors. Clothing, silver, jewelry, television sets, pianos—all were carted away from private homes and shops by truckloads of raucous troops. Jews who attempted to stop the pillage were brutally beaten—or, just as often, shot on the spot. Israeli women unlucky enough to be caught on the street by Arab soldiers were

stripped naked and repeatedly raped. And when Abba Khoushi, the Israeli mayor of Haifa who had negotiated the city's surrender, complained to Syrian Army authorities about the massive rash of rapes, he was advised that "the immodest dress of Jewish women provokes our God-fearing troops."

To make matters worse, Jordanian officials allowed Arab civilians to enter the former Israeli sector of Jerusalem. Thousands, mainly Palestinian refugees, arrived by the truckload from Hebron, Jericho and Nablus. They were joined by Arabs who crossed the old frontier that once divided the Holy City. Inebriated by their long-dreamed-of victory, the refugees began to strip the Jewish city like locusts. When the middle-aged owner of an Israeli electrical-appliance shop shot an Arab looter, an angry Arab mob descended on Zion Square and set fire to Jewish stores and apartment buildings along nearby Jaffa Road. As other Arabs streamed in from the Old City, the crowd howled for blood. The ringleaders of the mob dragged families of screaming Jews from an apartment house on Shamai Street, herded them into the tiny Arnon Cinema, then set the theater afire. Before Jordanian troops managed to restore order, sixty-four Jews perished in the fire and forty-seven others were beaten to death by the mob.

The next day, Arab occupation authorities sealed all roads leading to Israel. But the troops already stationed in the conquered Jewish state continued to wreak their retribution. Sated with looting, they turned their attention to settling old scores. Border settlements, such as Tel Katzir, which had taken a high toll of Arab lives during the long years of frontier clashes, were systematically destroyed and their surviving settlers brutally slaughtered or sent to detention camps. "Revenge units," led by local Arab commanders, roamed the countryside attacking Jewish settlements at random. In Gadera, south of Tel Aviv, Egyptian troops burned a local yeshiva to the ground, then shot the school's 47 students and its rabbi and sexually mutilated the rabbi's body. Near Jerusalem, a local Iraqi commander ordered his troops to level Eshtaol, a small farming village. When the Yemenite Jews in Eshtaol resisted, the entire population of the village—120 people in all—was lined up against a wall and

machine-gunned. In Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem, jeeploads of Arab troops careened through the streets, spraying Jewish homes with rifle and machine-gun fire. Israeli Arabs who had cooperated with the Jews were hunted down, tortured and hung by their heels from lampposts. In Nazareth, Arab Knesset member Abdul Aziz Zuabi was dragged from his home and publicly executed in the square adjoining the Church of the Annunciation. His body, wrapped in a white sheet, was left hanging from a makeshift gallows for two days. On it was pinned a cardboard sign reading "*Kha'yin*" (traitor).

Even while the reign of terror continued, the Arabs began to requisition thousands of apartments and private homes to bivouac their troops. With 27 percent of the dwellings in Israel destroyed or damaged beyond repair during the fighting, and with nearly half a million people already wandering around homeless, this only compounded the confusion and suffering.

To restore order to the occupied lands, the Arabs imported a small army of civilian administrators. First, the new bureaucrats summarily dismissed all Jews in important positions—mayors, bank executives, factory managers, union officials and even second-echelon government officials. Then they launched a massive roundup of potential troublemakers, herding almost 40,000 militant *kibbutzniks*, army officers, politicians, teachers and other intellectuals into sprawling detention camps in inaccessible stretches of the Sinai peninsula. The most important prisoners, such as the surviving members of the Israeli government, were taken to a heavily guarded jail in the city of Gaza, where they were under the personal supervision of ex-Nazi Dr. Heinrich Willerman.

With the Jewish leaders out of the way, the Arabs began to deal with the rest of the population. They organized a nationwide census. For weeks on end, the Jews flocked to Arab registration centers, where they were forced to turn in their old Israeli identification cards for yellow "occupation passports" stamped on the cover with the Arabic word *yahud* (Jew). The passports of non-*sabras* carried the additional word *agnabi* (foreigner). When the census was completed, Arab authorities discovered that out of the total prewar Jewish population of

2,400,000, some 93,000 Israeli troops and another 120,000 civilians had been killed in the Arab onslaught.

In the weeks that followed, the new rulers issued a series of sweeping edicts closing all public institutions and forbidding the reopening of Jewish schools until revised textbooks could be prepared. (In classic Jewish tradition, however, scores of underground schools sprang up in the basements of apartment buildings and in deserted buildings throughout the country.) In a further attempt to stifle organized Jewish civilian life, prohibitive property taxes were imposed on synagogues, and those that could not raise the money were shut down. All bank accounts were frozen until the Arabs issued occupation currency. The Jews were then ordered to cash in their Israeli pounds for Palestine dinars at less than half their old value. The publication of all Jewish newspapers was suspended, and *Kol Israel*—now renamed *Kol Palestine*—was staffed with Arab propagandists under the guidance of ex-Goebbels aide Hans Appler. Listening to foreign broadcasts was forbidden, and those caught doing so were thrown into prison.

Indeed, any form of Jewish resistance provoked swift retribution from the green-uniformed troops of the PSP (Palestine Special Police)—the crack antiresistance force set up by Oscar Dirlewanger. Thus, when three former Jewish reporters of the Tel Aviv daily *Ma'ariv* were caught mimeographing a clandestine newspaper, they were tortured for days and then publicly executed. And when students in the Jezreel Valley town of Afula declared a day-long sitdown strike to protest the closure of their high school, Syrian troops moved in and opened fire on the crowd.

The severest reprisals were reserved for those engaged—directly or indirectly—in armed resistance. From the outset of the occupation, small bands of Jewish guerrillas roamed the countryside, laying mines along roads used by Arab convoys, tossing Molotov cocktails at Arab police patrols and sabotaging Arab installations. Though the Arabs had made it a crime punishable by death to aid the guerrillas, most Israelis willingly took the risk. As a result, the ragtag guerrilla bands, known as Pashi (the acronym for *Plugot Shihzur Yisrael*, Israel Liber-

ation Units), easily melted into the population—an anonymous, elusive enemy within the Arabs’ “new order.”

On the first day of Hanukkah, 1967, the Egyptians deployed a small army of tanks and artillery around the Sharon Plain town of Ramatayim. While the townspeople were rounded up at gunpoint and assembled in an orange grove half a kilometer away, units of the dreaded PSP searched their homes for hidden weapons—and for members of the Pashi underground. Everyone in the town knew the reason for the search; the day before, an Arab patrol had discovered the decomposed body of a PSP colonel in a clump of eucalyptus trees along the old Tel Aviv-Haifa highway that ran through Ramatayim.

From the orange grove, the Jews watched as the Arabs led the twelve members of the town council to a shopping center along the road, not far from where the dead PSP colonel had been found. The twelve men were lined up against a wall facing a camouflaged Egyptian armored car. For the next fifteen minutes, as the people of Ramatayim looked on from the distance, an Arab officer stood in front of the line of Jews at the shopping center, gesturing wildly with his arms. Finally, with a shrug, the officer strode away to the armored car. For a moment, the twelve Jews remained frozen in their places in front of the wall. All at once, they began to run toward the safety of the eucalyptus trees beside the road. The Egyptian officer gave a signal with his hand, and the machine guns in the armored car cut down all twelve men. Just then, the tanks and artillery opened up with a deafening roar. And as the people in the orange grove looked on helplessly, their once-prosperous town was reduced to a pile of rubble.

Despite brutal reprisals like that at Ramatayim, the Arabs were unable to cow the Jews into submission. Attempts to set up local Jewish puppet councils, along the pattern of Nazi World War Two *Judenräte*, were dismal failures. And during the first months of the occupation, there was only one known instance of voluntary communal collaboration. In Jerusalem, an ultra-

orthodox sect known as Netorei Karta, which had refused on religious grounds to recognize the legality of the former Israeli government, sent a delegation to Amman, where it tacitly offered to cooperate with the Jordanian occupation authorities. But the *modus vivendi* with Netorie Karta lasted only a few short weeks. Misinterpreting his orders, a Jordanian second lieutenant closed down one of the sect's ritual bathhouses, and after that the leaders of Netorei Karta proclaimed a *herem*, or religious taboo, on anyone who collaborated with the Arabs.

While Arab troops struggled with a stubbornly unsubmitive population, Arab bureaucrats tried to harness the once-flourishing economy of Israel to the needs of their home governments. But here, too, the Arabs met with faint success. On security grounds, Jewish fishermen were forbidden to put out to sea, and their boats were placed under heavy guard on the beaches of Jaffa, Ashdod and Haifa. Automobiles and trucks that had not already been requisitioned rusted in back alleys from lack of gasoline. Forced to turn to horses and mule-drawn carts, Israel's vast agricultural and dairy marketing network strangled in confusion. And with major irrigation pipelines destroyed by the war, thousands of farmers were forced to allow their fields to become fallow. Predictably, food grew dangerously scarce. In a belated effort to make ends meet, the Arabs imposed rationing—a move that again forced the Jews to queue up at registration lines for multicolored food stamps.

By the summer of 1968, the heavy hand of the Arab bureaucracy had had a devastating impact on the economy. From neighborhood carpenter shops to the giant Nesher cement factory at Ramle, business ground to a halt or operated at greatly reduced capacity. Many factories were cut off from their traditional markets and had to sell their goods to neighboring Arab countries at a fraction of their actual value. Other firms were simply confiscated by Wilhelm Boekler's Palestine Refugee Reparations Board. And throughout the country, Israeli businessmen and bankers who were suspected of knowing the whereabouts of large sums of money were clamped into prison and tortured for the information.

For the second time that day, Major Mohammed Abu Sir found a convenient excuse to leave the small, windowless interrogation room at Petah Tikva. Ramrod-stiff, he walked down the hall past the three Egyptian guards to the toilet. Inside, he slowly closed the door behind him, loosened his necktie and vomited repeatedly into the urinal. Then, straightening his necktie, he returned to the interrogation room.

The stench was overpowering. On the floor, Harry Sapir lay in a pool of blood and vomit and feces. In a corner, his wife mumbled to herself. An Egyptian doctor bent over Sapir's broken body, then looked up at the major.

"I think he's dead," the doctor said.

"What do you mean, you *think*?" the major said.

"He's dead."

"Are you sure?"

"He's dead, Major. I'm sorry. He's dead."

The major opened the door of the interrogation room.

"Clean up this room immediately!" he shouted at the guards. Then he walked down the hall to the toilet.

On October 19, 1968—barely one month after the historic Arab summit meeting on Palestine—Governor General Munam Abdul Husaini sat down at his polished desk in Tel Aviv and penned a short note to Gamal Abdel Nasser. "It gives me great pleasure," he wrote, "to inform you that our policy of eradicating all traces of Jewish cultural and religious life in the territory under the control of the United Arab Republic has met with great success. We are making great progress in this regard."

Husaini was not exaggerating. By now, all Hebrew street and village names had been changed to Arabic (a reverse of what the Israelis themselves had done after the 1948 war). The use of the term "Israel" or "Israeli" was forbidden. Cemeteries had been desecrated and the tombstones carted off to repair roads damaged during the fighting. Monuments to Israeli heroes were still being dynamited months after the end of the war. In Jerusalem, the Mount Herzl memorial was turned into a Jordanian army camp, and the tomb of Theodore Herzl, the

founder of political Zionism, was flattened by bulldozers. Whole libraries were burned. The Israel Museum's vast collection of Judaica was quietly offered for sale through dealers in the West. Priceless archaeological treasures—like the Dead Sea Scrolls and relics from Hazor—were crated and sent to museums in Cairo, Damascus, Amman, Beirut and Baghdad. Others, like Masada, were simply demolished.

Throughout the occupation, there was one problem that the Arab conquerors put off as long as they could—the resettlement of the Palestinian refugees, the people in whose name the war had been fought. As the winter of 1968 approached, however, the Palestinians were clamoring to go home. To gain more time, the Refugee Reparations Board appointed a five-power commission to examine Palestinian claims and to determine who owned what before the Jews “usurped” the land. But the job of processing 418,321 claims was laboriously slow. By October, 1968, only a few thousand Palestinians had received permission to reclaim their former homes throughout Israel. Inevitably the claimants discovered that money could speed up the commission's paper work. One bribe led to another. Before long, the “rights” to a villa on the Carmel Heights could be acquired for \$5,000 American dollars. A chicken farm outside of Natanya went for \$7,500. A Yemenite restaurant in Beersheba brought \$1,500. And the November 2, 1968, edition of the London *Economist* dryly noted that the sprawling Kitan textile factory in Dimona had been bought for \$350,000 by a Beirut banker—a man who had never stepped foot in Palestine in his life.

If the Arabs were too preoccupied with the mechanics of occupation to care about the plight of the Jews, it was not completely ignored by the rest of the world. Though foreign newsmen were not permitted to enter the occupied zones, news of conditions there began to filter out from the Arab capitals themselves. In the fall of 1968, a Yugoslav reporter managed to obtain a permit to visit Egyptian Palestine. His reports, which he surreptitiously sold to the London *Times*, shocked the Western world. In America, people donated \$2.5 million to a “Save the

Children Fund” which provided hundreds of tons of powdered milk, vitamins and clothing for Jewish youngsters in Israel. The Quakers sent a quarter of a million blankets. The United States government donated 150,000 Sears Roebuck tents, and scores of squalid tent cities immediately sprang up all over Israel. American Jewish groups collected tens of millions of dollars, but were blocked by the Arabs from shipping in any supplies themselves. Eventually the United Nations organized a special Relief Agency for Israel. The Arabs agreed to the project on two conditions: that the group’s name be changed to the United Nations Agency for Palestine (UNAP) and that any relief funds originating from Jewish organizations be taxed 25 percent by the Refugee Reparations Board. The American Jews, the Arabs argued, had been “allies in the Zionist aggression.”

Gradually the Arabs began to realize that their harsh occupation policies were creating a worldwide reaction far more adverse than their leaders had anticipated. Protest groups in Western Europe and America organized a boycott of Arab products (except oil), and Denmark and the Ivory Coast introduced a motion in the UN Security Council condemning the Arab occupation powers for their “racist and inhumane excesses against the Jewish civilian population of Israel.”

As the American Presidential election approached, the Arabs came up with a spectacular proposal shrewdly designed to throw their critics on the defensive. As promulgated in Occupation Order Number 1223, the plan threatened the deportation within six months of all Jews who had not been born in Palestine. If carried out, this plan would have turned six out of ten Israelis into stateless persons. But the Arabs had no intention of going through with the forced deportations. They simply wanted to speed up the process of voluntary exile and demonstrate in the most dramatic way possible that despite all the righteous protestations, few countries were prepared to take in sizable numbers of Jewish immigrants. “When the world sees that they really don’t want the Jews any more than we do,” Nasser wrote Governor General Husaini, “they’ll have to keep their mouths shut.”

Just as Nasser suspected, the deportation order brought on a

crisis of conscience in the West. Hundreds of parliamentarians, academicians and editorial writers argued passionately that their countries had a moral obligation to open their gates to the Jewish immigrants. But though most people gave lip service to the idea, they had deep-seated reservations. Nowhere was the issue more divisive than in the United States. While the U.S. Senate was bogged down in a bitter debate over an emergency bill permitting unlimited Jewish immigration, pressure mounted in the country. Jewish organizations were thrown into turmoil. Most of them lobbied desperately in favor of the legislation, but the ultra-Zionists in their midst lobbied quietly against it. Their reasoning: siphoning off the Jewish population of Israel would end forever any hope of re-creating a Jewish state there. And on this point they were supported by none other than Golda Meir and Abba Eban, who had established an Israeli government-in-exile in New York City. In a full-page ad in the *New York Times*, Golda Meir and Abba Eban declared that “the people of Israel, momentarily defeated in battle, have not been vanquished. We are determined to regain the liberty that has been so savagely stolen from us. We are determined to remain in our homes.”

Other groups in America saw the potential flood of Jewish immigrants as a threat. Organized labor was frightened by the prospect of tens of thousands of highly skilled Jews competing on the job market. And Negro leaders privately pointed out that the Jewish problem could be alleviated only at the expense of unemployed blacks. Indeed, these and other reservations were shared by an overwhelming number of Americans. A Louis Harris poll revealed that 72.4 percent of the country felt “great sympathy” for but “little obligation” to the Jews of Israel.

The mood of the country was reflected by the politicians. Debating on television during the Presidential election campaign, candidates Robert Kennedy and Richard Nixon agreed that the United States should accept Jewish immigrants—but both were pointedly vague when it came to discussing numbers. At a press conference, President Hubert Horatio Humphrey declared: “We are a nation of immigrants. We shall open our

arms to the world's dispossessed and say to them as we have been taught to say, 'Give us your homeless.' " As a lame duck President, Humphrey could afford to indulge his penchant for moralistic musings. But his rhetoric had little effect on Congress, which sent him a bill (the last one he was to sign as President) setting a quota from Israel at 17,500 a year and establishing a Congressional commission to study the problem of Jewish immigration.

By early winter, long caravans of Jews were trudging across the ravaged face of Israel to the port of Gaza. There, under a broiling sun, occupation officials checked to see that none of the emigrants carried more than forty-four pounds of personal belongings or more than \$100 per family. As each Jew signed a statement that he was leaving the country of his own free will and would never return, his name was crossed off the official Palestine Population List. Clutching *laissez-passer* papers, the Jews boarded crowded trains for the Egyptian port of Alexandria. From there, fleets of small freighters carried them to refugee camps set up by the United Jewish Appeal at Naples and Marseilles. In an article in the *Saturday Evening Post*, freelance writer Curtis G. Pepper described the scene in Naples. "Silently the refugees stared at the Italian dockside," Pepper wrote. "When it came time to disembark, many of them refused to budge. One young, dark-haired woman, carrying a baby and a paper shopping bag, wept bitterly. 'This is all I have left,' she cried. 'Has the world lost its conscience? Where are all our friends? Where are we going to go now?'

"It was a scene beyond tragedy. A horrible, frightening exodus in reverse."

An armored car that once belonged to Bank Leumi Le-Israel pulled up to a side entrance of the Frederic R. Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv. From the rear stepped Moshe Dayan, his wrists manacled to two burly Egyptian plainclothesmen. As he walked through the door, Dayan noticed a tattered poster advertising one of the Israeli Philharmonic's old "Night in Vienna" programs. His guards led him down the carpeted aisle of the empty

auditorium to a seat on the stage directly in front of the five-man tribunal.

“I trust that your trip from Gaza wasn’t too uncomfortable,” Governor General Husaini, the president of the tribunal, said in Arabic.

“Armored cars aren’t built for pleasure trips,” Dayan answered in Hebrew.

“Would you speak in Arabic?” Husaini asked.

Dayan shrugged. “Armored cars aren’t built for pleasure trips,” he said, this time in Arabic.

Husaini, a fleshy man with heavy-lidded eyes, rolled an unlit Salem between his fingers. “I’m sure you know why you were brought here. You are charged with certain crimes. It is my duty to present the indictment.” He leaned toward the papers on the table and began reading. “You are hereby formally charged with crimes against humanity, crimes against the Arab people, plotting and executing aggression in nineteen forty-eight, nineteen fifty-six, nineteen sixty-seven. You are further charged with specific war crimes. Namely, that on the seventeenth day of May, nineteen hundred and forty-eight, you were personally responsible for the murder of a defenseless Arab civilian by the name of . . .”

As Husaini droned on, Dayan hardly bothered to listen. Though he would never admit it to Husaini, he had enjoyed the trip from Gaza enormously. It was the first time he had been out of the detention camp since his capture at the Ramon Crater. Now, looking thin but fit and dressed in rumpled Egyptian Army fatigues, Dayan knew that he was coming to the end of his imprisonment.

“. . . and that you personally ordered the execution of four Egyptian commandos captured while in full uniform behind Jewish lines.” Husaini looked up. He took off his cap and ran his fingers around the sweatband. “It is my understanding that Mr. Kamal Bakir of Cairo will act as your defense counsel.”

At the end of the long table, Bakir, a thin, angular man with a narrow head, stood up.

Before Bakir could say a word, Dayan was on his feet.

“General Husaini,” he said, “I thought I had made my posi-

tion very clear. I do not recognize Egyptian authority on this territory. You are in Israel, not in Egypt. This is an illegal proceeding, and I will not give it the appearance of legality by participating in it. Therefore, I'll accept no defense counsel and I'll make no appeals. You have the power to execute me—but not the right.” *

Dayan sat down as abruptly as he had stood up.

Husaini glanced at the court reporter. “You will omit General Dayan's remarks from the record,” he said coldly. He turned to Bakir. “Does the defense have any questions about the charges?”

“We have no questions.”

“Then,” Husaini said, “this trial will proceed.”

The flashlight in the distance blinked twice.

“He's left the village,” the young Jew whispered to his companion. “Let's get the barrels.”

Stumbling in the darkness, the two men rolled four heavy oil drums onto the road. Wordlessly they cocked their weapons and hid behind the brush. Moments later, two yellowish headlights flickered into sight as a canvas-covered jeep wound its way down the side of the Carmel Heights from the Druse village of Daliyat-el-Karmil. For a second, the headlights were lost in the curve of the road. Then the jeep appeared around the bend and skidded to a halt in front of the barricade.

The driver began to curse. Suddenly he caught sight of the two men approaching with rifles.

“Get out here on the road,” one of the Jews said in Arabic.

The Egyptian climbed out and put both hands on the back of his head. The Jewish guerrillas shone a flashlight on him.

“Look, he's just a major. Who the hell are you?”

The Egyptian, trembling with fear, stepped forward. “Major Resoul Hakim Nusseibah. Supply. Haifa. I was—”

“Oh, to hell!” one of the Jews said and spat on the road.

* The Egyptian court found the other surviving Israeli leaders, including Premier Levi Eshkol, no more cooperative than Dayan when they were brought to trial.

“Haimke swore there’d be a general in the jeep. They’ll never postpone the execution to save a major.”

Dizengoff Circle had been roped off. A wall of sandbags had been stacked against the side of a movie theater. The lieutenant in charge chatted with the doctor. The photographers took pictures. Husaini stood off to one side, puffing steadily on a cigarette. Dayan, looking very pale in the bright sunlight, read from a small Bible.

At a nod from Husaini, the lieutenant called his men to attention. Then, he walked over to Dayan.

“General,” he said.

Dayan put the Bible in his pocket. The lieutenant tied Dayan’s hands and feet to a post, slipped a black hood over his head, then returned to his men.

A moment later, a volley crackled across Dizengoff Circle. Dayan slumped forward.

The lieutenant approached the limp figure, drew a Soviet-made pistol, pressed the muzzle against Dayan’s temple and gently squeezed the trigger.

Yigal Allon was hardly recognizable. He looked far older than his fifty years. His sandy hair was dyed gray. His face was obscured by a thick beard. His springy step was gone; he had taught himself to walk with a shuffle. Even his name was different; the onetime underground commander and, more recently, Minister of Labor in the Eshkol government carried papers identifying him as Zvi Silverman, a mail sorter in the Tiberias post office. Only Allon’s eyes, cold and penetrating, remained unchanged.

In the semidarkness of the apartment, Allon handed a glass of tea to a man sitting on the couch.

“I’m sorry I can’t offer you sugar,” Allon said.

Shlomo Gal stirred the tea anyway. A young, blond man with a long narrow nose, Gal had been sitting wordlessly with Allon for the past twenty minutes.

“Do you still think he’s coming?” Gal asked.

“Let’s give it another ten minutes,” Allon said.

The two men continued to wait. A few minutes later there was a single knock on the door. Allon sat motionless. Five seconds later there was another single rap. At that, Allon walked over and opened the door.

“Come in, Shimon.”

The short man in Arab peasant dress who entered had only one arm. The empty left sleeve of his striped *jellaba* was pinned neatly to the side. Even in the half-light, his skin looked sallow. And his eyes were almost lost behind prominent cheekbones.

“What took you so long?” Gal asked.

“I was just being careful,” Shimon answered as he removed a dirty white *kaffiyah* from his head. “There was a heavier guard than usual at the PSP checkpoint near Alonim, so I came through the hills.”

The three men sat down at a table in the small kitchen. Allon pushed aside a set of red plastic salt and pepper shakers and a worn leather-covered Bible. Gal took out a small orange notebook.

“I think it’s best if we don’t take notes,” Allon said.

Gal put the book away.

Allon rolled back the sleeves of his shirt. “I’ve heard some bad news today. The Egyptians are getting ready for another trial. I think this time it’s going to be Eshkol. They may be preparing another Dizengoff performance for the second anniversary.”

“Do you have any ideas?” Shimon asked.

“About Eshkol, nothing,” Allon said. “He’s lost. But I have a lot of ideas.”

And there near the shores of the Sea of Galilee, in the kitchen of a shabby Tiberias apartment, while a teakettle simmered on a kerosene stove, Yigal Allon began the painstaking job of organizing a new Jewish resistance movement.

“Our first problem,” Allon began, “is to convince you and your Pashi people to stop all this suicidal terrorism. So far, it’s done us more harm than good. The killing of that Egyptian

supply officer for Dayan was childish. After what the Egyptians did to Daliyat-el-Karmil, it will be a long time before a Druse helps us again.”

The teakettle whistled. Allon turned down the burner and poured a glass of tea for Shimon.

“I’m sorry, no sugar,” Allon said.

“Listen, Yigal,” Shimon said, “maybe some of our raids haven’t paid off. But my men are desperate. They’ve lost their families and everything they built. They’re like animals. They want to kill every Arab soldier they can get their hands on—and with their hands if possible. If our people are suffering as a result, at least they know there’s still someone fighting for them.”

Shimon paused to catch his breath. “There’s only one way I could convince my men to stop. And that’s if they saw an alternative. A real underground army. But for that we need guns, equipment, ammunition—not talk.”

Allon shuffled back to his seat. “Let me tell you a story,” he said. “On the first day of the war, Eshkol came to me and asked me a question. ‘Yigal,’ he said, ‘do you remember the caches we hid in the Carmel during World War Two?’ Did I remember? How could I forget? Then Eshkol said to me: ‘Yigal,’ he said, ‘if things go badly, we’ll need them again.’ And Eshkol told me to store everything we’d need for a new underground in the Carmel.”

Gal and Shimon looked at each other.

“Guns are not our problem,” Allon said. “Ammunition is not our problem. I’ve got mortars, bazookas, dynamite, *plastiques*, crates of hand grenades. I’ve got the dies for Uzzis. I’ve got transmitters. I’ve got two printing presses. I stored sewing machines to make uniforms. And thanks to a man named Harry Sapir, I even have enough funds.”

“If you have all this,” Shimon said coolly, “why haven’t we seen any of it? Why have you been waiting so long?”

Allon didn’t hesitate. “Because I refuse to see it pissed away in indiscriminate terror. Look, this isn’t 1947 and the Arabs aren’t the British. Nasser doesn’t give a damn if you assassinate two hundred Egyptian majors next month. He’s just going

to send in two hundred more majors and ten thousand more troops. And they're going to slaughter twenty thousand Jews and drag twenty thousand others off to Sinai concentration camps."

Allon tugged at his beard. "What we need is solid organization. Maybe eventually with volunteers smuggled in from abroad. But right now, a network of men and women who will take orders. People who'll know where it's best to strike and when. Not heroes. We have to know when to use political agitation, when to use general strikes and when to use terror. We've got to get posters on walls and underground newspapers to the people. In a fight for independence, the printing press is just as important as the *plastique*."

Gal was already engrossed in details. "The transmitter needs a truck. We'll have to keep on the move when we broadcast. Otherwise the Egyptians will get a fix on us in minutes."

Shimon leaned over and put his good arm around Gal's shoulders. "You stick to the propaganda end," he said paternally. "When the time comes, my boys will get you a truck."

"We have a lot to do before we worry about trucks," Allon said. "First I want a tight network. We're going to organize it the way the Algerians operated against the French." Here Allon placed the fingers of his two hands together in the shape of a pyramid. "A series of three-man pyramids from top to bottom. I don't want to know who the men are in the pyramids under you, and you won't know who the men are in the pyramids under them. This way the Egyptians will never be able to torture a man into giving away the whole net—because no one man will know the whole net, not even me."

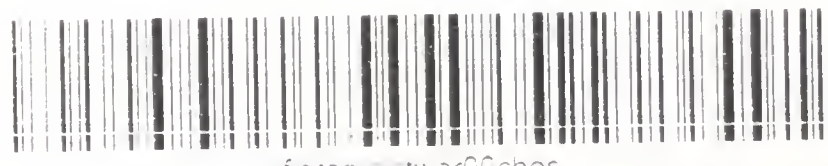
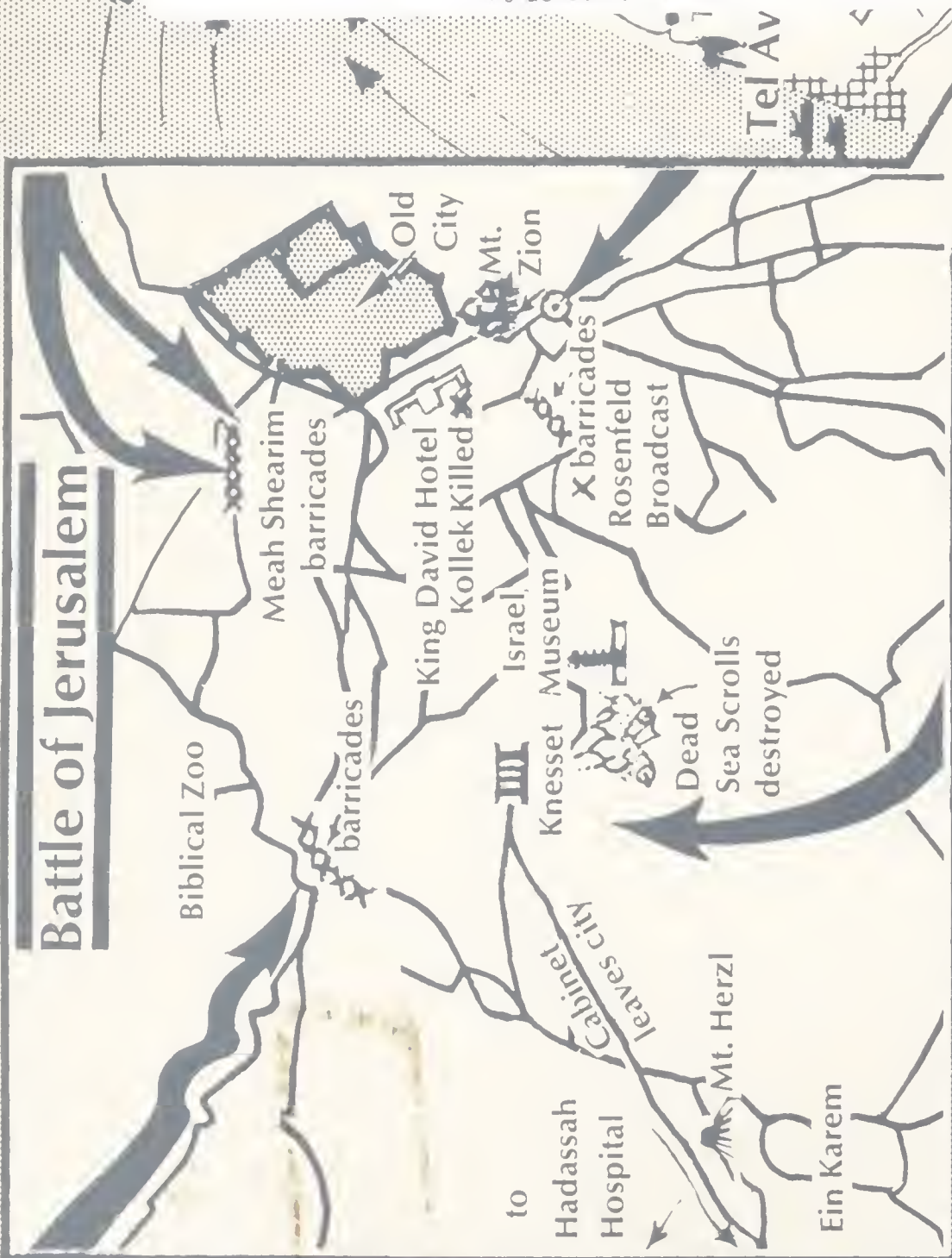
Gal shook his head. "It's going to be a bloody business, isn't it." It was more of a statement than a question.

Allon got up and stared out the kitchen window. His gaze passed across the blue waters, toward where his own *kibbutz*, Ginnosar, had once stood. "We managed once before," he said. "We'll manage again."

Then he picked up the Bible and leafed through the pages until he came to a passage underlined in Deuteronomy. Allon read out loud:

“When thou goest into battle against thine enemies and seest horses and chariots and a people more than thou, be not afraid; for the Lord thy God is with thee, O Israel. Let not your hearts be faint, fear not, and do not tremble.”

Battle of Jerusalem



(Continued from front flap)

idea was not as incredible as it first appeared. Former Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir had privately told the authors: "Just imagine if Nasser had gotten to our airfields first. What would have happened . . .?"

What *would* have happened is the subject of this extraordinarily dramatic narrative of a nightmare in the Middle East and its repercussions around the world. Beyond that, the book challenges—with compelling documentation—the conventional wisdom concerning American policy toward Israel—namely, that ultimately Israel's survival is guaranteed by the United States.

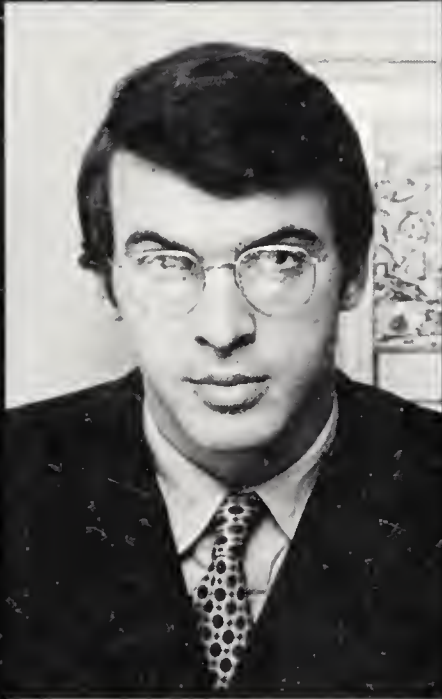
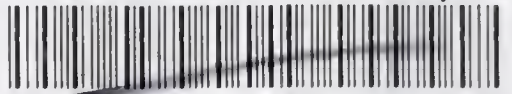
Mixing a tightly woven fabric of hard fact and plausible fiction, *IF ISRAEL LOST THE WAR* goes behind the scenes and explores the decision-making process in the highest power centers from Washington to Moscow. It is a novel that cannot fail to shock, fascinate, and forewarn.



Proper
San M
Pu
Lib

COWARD-McCANN, INC.
Publishers
200 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016

PRINTED
IN
U.S.A.

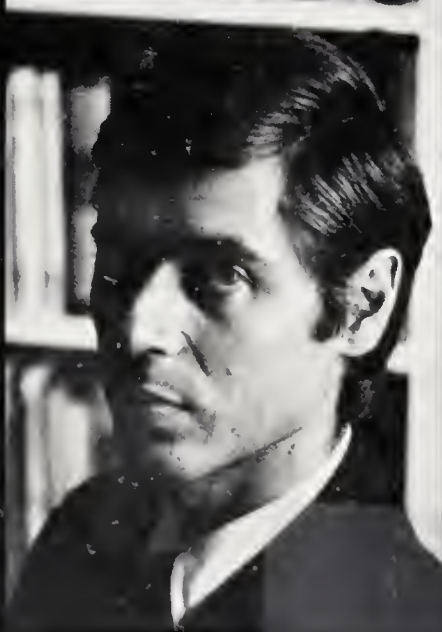


Jack Nisberg

RICHARD Z. CHESNOFF was born in New York in 1937. He has lived on a kibbutz and attended Jerusalem's Hebrew University. Currently he is a correspondent in NEWSWEEK's Paris bureau. He is married to a native-born Israeli, and they have one son.



EDWARD KLEIN, born in 1936, attended Columbia University and the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. He is deputy to the Foreign Editor of NEWSWEEK with the title of General Editor. He lives with his wife and two children in Manhattan.



Barbara Johnstone

ROBERT LITTELL, an Associate Editor at NEWSWEEK, was born in 1935. He attended Alfred University, served as a lieutenant (jg) in the Navy, and worked for Newsday. He and his wife, Deanna Littell, the fashion designer, live in Manhattan with their son.