

BACKGROUND GUIDE

YOM KIPPUR CRISIS



MEDMUN 2019

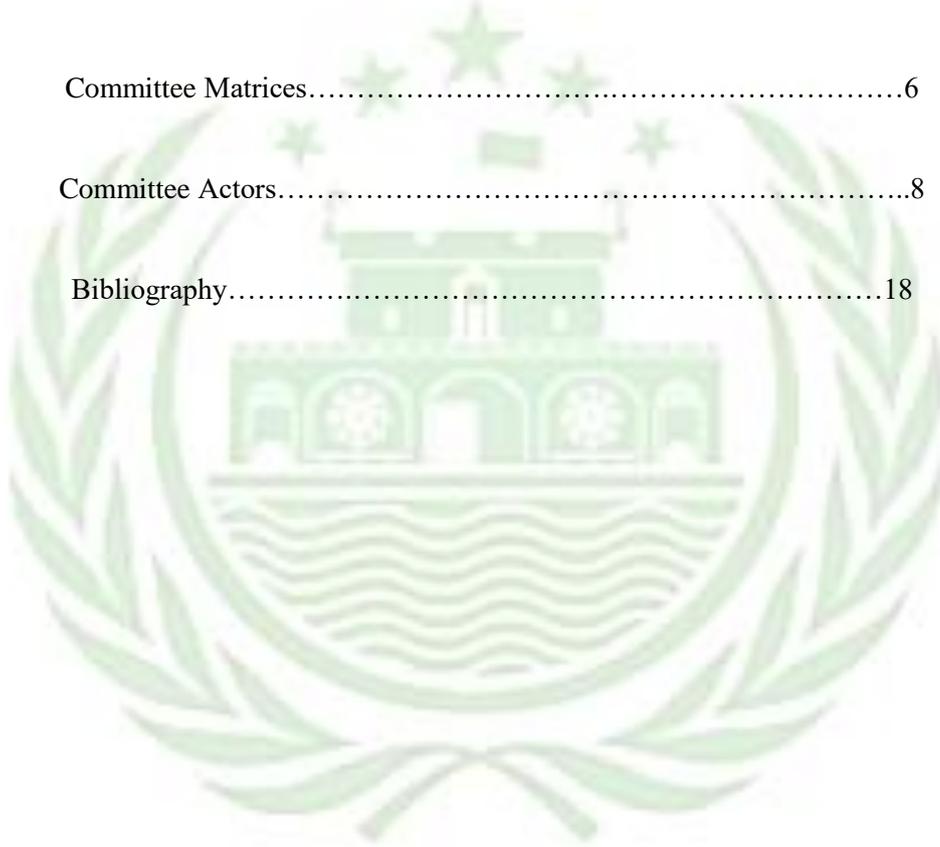
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Mediterranean Model United Nations

1. About the topic

The Yom Kippur War of 1973 was a military confrontation between a coalition of Arab States and the state of Israel fought from October 6th to October 25th. The war took place mostly in Sinai and the Golan Heights -- occupied by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War -- with some fighting in Egypt and northern Israel. It was without a doubt a devastating conflict that resulted in the deaths of several thousand soldiers and civilians on both sides, and the involved regions continue to be influenced by the social, political, and economic impacts of the war to this day.

2. Historical Context

To effectively understand the Yom Kippur War, one must go back to the regional situation in the beginning of the 20th century. During World War I, British forces gained control of the Palestine region from the Ottomans and formalized their rule by the mandate in 1922. Conflict was already brewing, as Britain's support for a Jewish Homeland in Palestine had been made clear in 1917 by the Balfour Declaration and non-Jewish Palestinians (as well as some Orthodox Jews) were vehemently opposed to the idea. The British did try to mitigate the tensions between these two forces but all attempts failed. They were powerless as conflicts between the Jews and non-Jews continued to escalate, causing periodic revolts and unrest.

In 1947, the United Nations formally suggested the partition of Palestine into three states: an Arab state, a Jewish state, and an internationally-governed *corpus separatum* ("separate entity") for the holy city of Jerusalem. The Jewish front welcomed this proposal while the Arab nationalists rejected it (the partition scheme was arguably more favorable for the Jews). The rejection of this UN proposal marked the beginning of a civil war between the Arabs and Jews which ended in Jewish victory, resulting in the proclamation of the state of Israel by the Jewish front in May 14th, 1948.

A coalition of Arab states including Egypt, Syria, and Jordan responded to this proclamation by invading the nascent Israel, sparking the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. The international community largely expected Israel to capitulate, but exhaltable military performance supported by generous military aid from allies granted them the final victory. This war would forever plague the relationship of the Israelis and the surrounding Arabs, initiating a pattern of militant interactions between the two parties throughout the rest of the 20th century.

In 1956, escalating hostilities between Egypt and Israel, France, and the United Kingdom resulted in the Suez Crisis -- a military confrontation between the aforementioned belligerents. It was Israel this time that launched a preemptive strike against Egyptian positions under the support of France and the United Kingdom. The invading forces achieved a military victory but faced heavy criticism from the international community. Egypt was largely regarded as the political victor of this conflict.

In 1967, another Arab-Israeli conflict arose: the Six-Day War. Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping vessels, reintroducing a measure that previously caused the Suez Crisis in 1956. Israel had already announced that it would regard such action as a *casus belli*, and accordingly launched a preemptive strike against Egyptian positions on June 5th. Egypt was completely taken by surprise -- their air force was quickly decimated by Israeli airstrikes, and their ground forces were incapable of repelling the Israeli offensive into the Gaza Strip region and the Sinai Peninsula. Egypt's president Gamal Abdel Nasser was able to bring its Arab allies Syria and Jordan into the fight, but to no avail -- Israel seized the West Bank region from the Jordanians and the Golan Heights from the Syrians by June 10th. The Six-Day War of 1967 was a resounding victory for Israel and an utterly humiliating defeat for the Arab states. The massive territorial gains Israel achieved through this war would become pivotal factors in the Yom Kippur War that would break out a couple of years later.

Shortly after the Six-Day War, the Israeli cabinet expressed an interest in returning Sinai to Egypt and the Golan Heights to Syria in exchange for a permanent peace settlement with the Arab states. This plan was never formalized into an official peace proposal, but the Arab states nonetheless responded with the famous "three no's" of the 1967 Khartoum Arab Summit: no peace, recognition of statehood, nor negotiation with Israel.

3. Current Situation

Nasser of Egypt died in 1970 and was replaced by Anwar Sadat. In the same year, Hafez al-Assad of Syria launched a coup (the "Syrian Corrective Revolution") that made him the new leader of his country with full control. Both new leaders were interested in starting a military engagement with Israel. They agreed that a successful war would redeem their countries from previous defeats as well as give them the political leverage required to get back the territories lost in the 1967 war. Thus, Egypt and Syria laid forth a huge military build up in preparation for a surprise invasion.

However, Egypt and Syria had different intentions going into this surprise attack. Syria saw the military option as the only way to solve the Israeli question, while Egypt was more interested in using it as a bargaining chip to negotiate with Israel. Upon victory, Egypt planned on initiating peace negotiations with Israel to get back the territories it had lost in the 1967 war as well as commit to a formal peace agreement with Israel to win the favor of the international community. Therefore, as Sadat prepared for his surprise attack, he also expressed his interest in solving the decades-old Egypt-Israeli conflict through diplomacy. In fact, in December of 1970, Sadat told the New York Times that he was ready to "recognize the rights of Israel as an independent state as defined by the Security Council of the United Nations" in exchange for Israeli pullback from the Sinai. Sadat's peace initiatives were welcomed by the international community as well as certain members of the Israeli leadership. However, the Israelis were ultimately uninterested in pulling back from the

territories it won in 1967, convincing Sadat and al-Assad that a military engagement was necessary.

The Israelis were largely unaware of Egypt and Syria's military preparations. Little to no measures were taken to thwart the Arab threat because the IDF and Mossad underestimated the strength of the Egyptian and Syrian armies and the US stopped Israel from engaging in tension-building activity. Most importantly, the King of Jordan warned Golda Meir of the impending conflict but his warning was rejected.

And this is when the simulation starts. It is **February 9th, 1973** -- the day before, Anwar Sadat of Egypt had responded positively to a Arab-Israeli peace deal drafted by the United Nations. In it Sadat agreed to recognize Israel as an independent state if Israel withdraws from its acquisitions of the 1967 war (Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights, West Bank).

The Israeli Camp must begin by discussing how to respond to Sadat's proposal. Will Israel accept Sadat's demands? Can they even be trusted? The Arab Camp must also begin by discussing Sadat's proposal. Does Sadat's position represent that of the entire Arab Camp? Is it enough to convince the Israelis? Would a military option be a more effective solution?

The delegates of the United States and Soviet Union, while focusing on the interests of their respective committees, will also stay true to their country's interests. Both the US and USSR were interested in the de-escalation of the Arab-Israeli conflict in order to avoid confrontation between the two superpowers, but they were nonetheless committed to the support of their respective allies if conflict was inevitable.

1917	Balfour Declaration; Britain pledges support for Jewish Homeland in Palestine
1922	Britain gained control of Palestine from the Ottomans; formalized rule by mandate
1947	United Nations proposal for partition of Palestine into three states: an Arab state, a Jewish state, and an internationally-governed <i>corpus separatum</i> for Jerusalem
1948	Arab-Israeli War
1956	Suez Crisis
1967	Six-Day War

1970	Sadat becomes leader of Egypt, Hafez al-Assad of Syria
1973 (feb.)	Sadat of Egypt accepts UN-drafted peace deal; agrees to recognize Israeli statehood in exchange for Israeli pullback from territories gained in 1967 war
BEGINNING OF COMMITTEE SESSION	
1973 (oct.)	Yom Kippur War

4. Committee Matrices

Israeli Camp (Israeli cabinet & pro-Israeli powers)

Israel	Golda Meir	Prime Minister
	Moshe Dayan	Minister of Defense
	David Elazar	Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces
	Yitzhak Hofi	General, Chief of the Israeli Northern Command
	Shmuel Gonen	General, Chief of the Israeli Southern Command
	Ariel Sharon	General, commander of reserve armored division (Southern Command), co-founder of the Likud Party
	Avraham Adan	Major General, Commander of the 162nd Division (Southern Command)
	Haim Bar-Lev	Minister of Trade and Industry

	Zvi Zamir	Director of Mossad
	Menachem Begin	Founder of the Likud Party
USA	Henry Kissinger	Secretary of State

Arab Camp (Arab leaders & pro-Arab powers)

Egypt	Anwar Sadat	President
	Ahmad Ismail Ali	Minister of Defense
	Saad el-Shazly	Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces
Syria	Hafez al-Assad	President
	Mustafa Tlass	Minister of Defense
	Yusuf Shakkur	Chief of Staff of the Syrian Armed Forces
Jordan	Hussein bin Talal	King of Jordan
	Zaid Rifai	Prime Minister
USSR	Yuri Andropov	Chairman of the KGB
Algeria	Houari Boumediène	President, Secretary General of Non-Aligned Movement
Palestine	Yasser Arafat	Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization

Committee Actors

Israeli Camp

The Israel Camp is composed of members of the Israeli cabinet, military personnel of the Israeli Defense Force, foreign representatives supporting Israel, and notable figures from Israeli civil society. Delegates of this camp must navigate through complex internal dynamics as well as external uncertainties in order to respond to the circumstances leading up to the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Cooperation and dialogue are essential in successfully enduring this crisis, but delegates should not shy away from political shrewdness or military might either. The sacred homeland is at stake -- everything must be done to prevent it from capitulation.

The primary objective of the Israel camp is **security**. The committee must commit to the safety and sovereignty of the state of Israel, utilizing any and all means available. Secondly, the camp must recover Israel's **diplomatic status** in the international community. Criticism towards Israel is growing, even from key partners like Western European states and the United States. The camp must stop this problem, or at least not aggravate it. Lastly, it must **safeguard the territories** Israel gained through the 1967 Six-Day War -- the Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights, West Bank, and Gaza Strip. These territorial gains were won with Israeli blood; it cannot be given away easily.

Committee Actors

Golda Meir

Golda Meir was born in Kiev, Ukraine. In 1906, she and her family immigrated to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in the United States, where she was educated and would eventually become involved with the Labor Zionist movement. In 1921, she and her husband immigrated to Mandatory Palestine. They settled on a kibbutz and later moved to Tel Aviv and then Jerusalem, where she joined Histadrut, the General Organization of Workers in Israel. She served as the Jewish observer from Palestine at the Évian Conference in 1938, where she witnessed the betrayal of European Jews. This experience—and early encounters with anti semitic violence in Ukraine—informed her Zionist politics. After World War II, Meir played an important role in the establishment of the Jewish state—was one of twenty-four signatories of the Israeli declaration of independence. In 1949, she was elected to the Knesset as a member of center-left Labor Zionist party Mapai. She served as Foreign Minister to Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and oversaw Israeli foreign policy during the Suez Crisis. Meir retired for health reasons, but returned to party politics shortly thereafter to replace Prime Minister Levi Eshkol after his sudden death. As Prime Minister (1969-1974), Meir led the Alignment (a coalition that included Mapai, by now much larger, and the Labor Party). She promoted peace in the Middle East, but made no territorial concessions and approved the first Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Meir also maintained a close

relationship with Washington, and on the eve of war maneuvered to ensure American support.

Moshe Dayan

Moshe Dayan was born on a kibbutz in then-Ottoman Palestine to Ukrainian Jewish parents. He was raised on the first moshav. At the age of fourteen, Dayan joined the Haganah. In 1938 he joined the Jewish Supernumerary Police, which had been established by the British mandate government. In the 1930s and 1940s he was involved in skirmishes with local Arab militias and border patrols; during one such confrontation, he and his unit were taken prisoner and held in Acre for more than a year. In 1941, he was shot in the eye by a French sniper during an attack on a Vichy police station in Lebanon. He nearly died, and for the rest of his life wore an eyepatch that came to symbolize his bravery and heighten his charisma. At the insistence of David Ben-Gurion, Dayan was given an important command during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. He continued to serve after independence as Chief of the Southern Command, and in 1953 was appointed Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces. Dayan is credited with restructuring the IDF and strengthening Israel's offensive capabilities. His tenure was marked by controversy, including deadly attacks on Arab civilians, and his relationship with the Ministry of Defense was often tense. Nevertheless, Dayan's military leadership during the Sinai campaign (1956) and the Six-Day War (1967) made him wildly popular in Israel, and cemented his place in the Israeli imagination. He is remembered for his eloquent eulogy of kibbutz security guard Roi Rotberg, who was killed in an attack near the Gaza Strip. Dayan's Zionist eulogy is considered one of the most important speeches in Israeli history. He was considered a likely prime ministerial candidate, and would eventually head up the Ministry of Defense. After Golda Meir became prime minister in 1969, Dayan remained Minister of Defense. In the run-up to war in 1973, Dayan insisted that war was unlikely.

David Elazar

David Elazar was born in Sarajevo to Sephardic Jewish parents. He immigrated to Mandatory Palestine in 1940, at the age of fifteen, and settled on a kibbutz. He fought with the Palmach (the Haganah's "strike forces") during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Elazar continued to serve in the army after the war and distinguished himself during the Sinai campaign (1956) and the Six-Day War (1967). Elazar, then Chief of the Northern Command, advocated that Israel seize the Syrian Golan Heights, and led the Israeli campaign to capture it. In 1972, Elazar was appointed Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces. As Chief of Staff, Elazar oversaw the Israeli response to the Munich massacre of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Summer Olympics, ordered the downing of a Libyan passenger plane that had accidentally crossed into Israeli-controlled airspace, and announced a state of emergency in response to the mobilization of Egyptian troops in May 1973. The state of emergency was eventually called off when it was revealed that the Egyptian troops were simply participating in military exercises. This first "scare," only four months before the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, lulled the IDF and the Ministry of Defense into a false sense of security. In

October 1973 —as other important military advisors like Moshe Dayan refused to believe that war was possible— Elazar became convinced that war would break out and requested to mobilize Israel’s reserve army and engage in preemptive strikes on Egyptian targets. His requests were denied, although he moved to call up some of Israel’s reserves anyway.

Yitzhak Hofi

Yitzhak Hofi was born in Tel Aviv. He joined the Haganah and fought in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. After the war he remained in the Israel Defense Forces, rising up through the ranks. On the eve of war in 1973, he headed the Northern Command of the IDF, which is responsible for maintaining Israel’s particularly Lebanese and Syrian borders.

Shmuel Gonen

Shmuel Gonen was born in Vilna, Poland. His family immigrated to Mandatory Palestine when he was three years old. When he was fourteen he joined the Haganah and fought in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. After the war he remained in the Israel Defense Forces and distinguished himself during the Suez Crisis and the Six-Day War (1967). In July 1973, he replaced Ariel Sharon as Chief of the Southern Command. He was replaced by Haim Bar-Lev four days after the war began. He is remembered as a harsh commander.

Haim Bar-Lev

Haim Bar-Lev was born in Vienna. He immigrated to Mandatory Palestine in 1939. In the 1940s, he joined the Palmach (the Haganah’s “strike forces”) and participated in their military and terrorist operations in the run-up to the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. During the war, he commanded the Eighth Battalion in the Negev Brigade of the Israel Defense Forces; after the war, he remained in the army and served during the Suez Crisis and the Six-Day War (1967). His leadership during the Six-Day War proved pivotal; he approved the construction of the so-called “Bar Lev Line,” fortifications that symbolized Israeli military sophistication. He left the IDF and was appointed Minister of Trade and Industry in the Alignment government of Prime Ministers Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir; in 1973, he was recalled to replace Shmuel Gonen as Chief of the Southern Command. He is remembered as a cool-headed, effective leader.

Ariel Sharon

Ariel Sharon was born on a moshav in Mandatory Palestine. His parents had emigrated from the Soviet Union. He joined the Gadna (the youth arm of the Haganah) and later the Haganah. He was wounded during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War; after the war he remained in the Israel Defense Forces before leaving to study at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He returned to head up Unit 101, a special forces unit which attacked Palestinian and Jordanian military and civilian targets. He led the Qibya massacre in which sixty-nine Palestinian

villagers were murdered, and an official inquiry found that he was responsible for the Sabra and Shatila massacre of hundreds of Palestinian civilians. Sharon led soldiers in the Suez Crisis (1956) and the Six-Day War (1967), and returned to active duty again during the Yom Kippur War. He founded the far-right Likud Party earlier that same year; Likud competed with the ruling Alignment government and would eventually come to power in 1977. He is remembered as an aggressive commander who acted impulsively (and decisively), and who cared little for given orders or for the lives of Palestinian civilians.

Avraham Adan

Avraham Adan was born in Mandatory Palestine. He joined the Palmach (the Haganah's "strike forces") and during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War fought in the Eighth Battalion of the Negev Brigade. He famously raised the so-called "Ink Flag" at Umm Rashrash (now Eilat), the southernmost point of the newly created state of Israel. He continued to serve in the Israel Defense Forces after the war, and fought in the Sinai campaign (1956) and the Six-Day War (1967). He was on the ground in the Sinai when war broke out in 1973.

Zvi Zamir

Zvi Zamir was born in Łódź, Poland to Jewish parents. Not long after he was born, the family immigrated to Mandatory Palestine. When he was eighteen, he joined the Palmach (the Haganah's "strike forces"). During the 1948 Arab-Israeli War he fought with the Israel Defense Forces. After the war he remained in the IDF and was eventually appointed head of the Southern Command, before making the transition to Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency. As Director of Mossad, Zamir helped coordinate Operation Wrath of God, Israel's response to the Munich massacre of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Summer Olympics. The operation would define his career, and their failure to rescue the Israeli hostages left an indelible impression on Zamir.

Menachem Begin

Menachem Begin was born in Brest-Litovsk. As a child he was involved in Zionist youth groups. He attended the University of Warsaw; afterward, he was active in Zionist organizations in Poland and later Estonia, for which he was persecuted by the Soviet government. He left for Palestine during World War II; many of his family members perished in the Holocaust. In Palestine he criticized the Zionist movement for its passive collaboration with the British, and joined the Irgun, a Jewish paramilitary group. Beginning in 1944, as leader of the Irgun, Begin led attacks against the British mandate government. During the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the Irgun perpetrated the Deir Yassin massacre of more than one hundred Palestinians. Critical of Zionist leadership, Begin was branded a radical—only after the war, as the Israeli state took shape, did Begin enter the establishment by founding Herut, a far-right party with fascist tendencies. His vision for Israel was rooted in an unrepentant Zionism; Begin would allow no concessions, whether to Israel's Arab neighbors or to European powers like the British and the Germans. Begin's new party, Gahal

(the result of a merger) joined the Alignment under Prime Ministers Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir. Gahal left the Alignment in 1970 because its members disagreed with the proposed Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. Together with Ariel Sharon, Begin reconstituted the Israeli right-wing movement under the umbrella coalition Likud. The Yom Kippur War would prove useful to the Likud—the war was an opportunity to define the Likud in opposition to the ruling Alignment.

Henry Kissinger

Henry Kissinger was born in Bavaria to German Jewish parents. The Kissinger family fled Germany in 1938, eventually settling in New York. In 1943 he was drafted into the Army. He served as an intelligence operative and later as an administrator during the American occupation of Germany. After the war, Kissinger studied at Harvard University, where he earned three degrees. He came up in the private sphere: first at Harvard, then at the Council on Foreign Relations, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and other think tanks. He was made foreign policy advisor to the three unsuccessful presidential campaigns of Nelson Rockefeller; in 1968, after Nixon beat his candidate and became president, he made Kissinger National Security Advisor. Kissinger helped shape United States foreign policy according to the principles of *realpolitik*—that is, making decisions based on the specific circumstances of the moment, rather than for ideological reasons. Kissinger became secretary of state in September 1973. His attitude toward Israel was pragmatic: he believed that the United States should defend Israel only to the extent to which it benefited American policy goals.

Arab Camp

The Arab Camp is composed of leaders and military personnel from Arab countries that participated in the Yom Kippur War or those that supported the Arab cause. This heterogeneous group must put each other's differences aside to deal with several vital questions: how will Palestine be given independence? How will Egypt, Syria, and Jordan get back the territories it lost in the disastrous 1967 war? Is peace with Israel desirable? Dialogue and cooperation will be the central to the success of the Arab Camp, but delegates should not shy away from employing a variety of methods to manage conflicting interests and visions inside the Arab Camp.

The primary objective of the Arab camp is **territorial reclamation**. The committee must retrieve the lands lost in the 1967 Six-Day War -- the Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights, West Bank, and Gaza Strip. Secondly, the camp must gain the **favor of the international community, in particular the US and USSR**, in order to weaken Israel's foreign aid. Lastly, it must reach a **definitive solution for the Israeli-Palestine question**. One must finalize the decades long Arab-Israeli conflict once and for all, preventing further bloodshed.

Anwar Sadat

Muhammad Anwar el-Sadat was a prominent figure in Egypt's military and government that served as the country's president from 1970 to 1981. Born into a poor Nubian family from the Monufia region of Egypt, Sadat entered the Egyptian Army in 1938. He eventually formed the Free Officers movement with several other military officers (notably Gamal Abdel Nasser), vowing to bring an end to British domination over Egypt and dethrone the pro-British King Farouk I. After the 1952 revolution that eventually put Gamal Abdel Nasser to power, Sadat served various positions that got him closer and closer to Nasser. He became Nasser's Vice President in 1967 and then president in 1970 following Nasser's death. As president, Sadat was versatile, pragmatic, and patient. His flexibility, especially with regard to weighty issues such as Egypt's relations with Israel, came in stark contrast to President Nasser's characteristic hardheadedness. At the same time, Sadat is said to have been a very passionate person at heart. This sometimes translated to brashness and aggressiveness, qualities he learned to control with more experience in the political arena. Accounts state, however, that his brashness often overtook him at times of great pressure.

Ahmad Ismail Ali

Ahmad Ismail Ali was a general of the Egyptian Army that played a central role in the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Born in Cairo, he entered the Egyptian Army in 1938 and participated in a variety of military engagements. During World War II, he saw action in the Western Desert Front on the side of the Allies. He served as brigade commander in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and 1956 Suez Crisis, and as divisional commander in the 1967 Six-Day War. In 1969, he became chief of state under President Nasser but was dismissed shortly thereafter to take responsibility for successful raids from Israel. In 1970, Nasser's successor Anwar Sadat named Ahmad Ismail Ali the chief of intelligence. He increasingly proved his effectiveness to Sadat, even saving him from a coup d'état attempt in 1972. Sadat named him Minister of Defense and Commander in Chief later that year, and worked closely with him to coordinate the 1973 Sinai offensive that would start the Yom Kippur War. As a general, Ahmad Ismail Ali was renowned for his leadership and strategy skills that came from many years of active duty experience. He played a central role in devising and executing Operation Badr, the highly successful offensive to cross the Suez Canal into the Sinai. Sources indicate that he was quite pro-Soviet.

Saad el-Shazly

Saad el-Shazly was a general of the Egyptian Army that served as Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. He was widely respected as a daring and adroit commander, particularly after his feats during the 1967 Six-Day War. Shortly after the war started, Egypt's central command determined that Israel's advancement through the Sinai could not be stopped and ordered all forces in the region to retreat west of the Suez

Canal. El-Shazly could not follow this order; his position in Central Sinai was completely surrounded by Israeli forces, and marching west would have guaranteed capture or annihilation. El-Shazly instead moved his troops East, into Israeli territory -- he appropriately predicted that Israeli forces behind the frontline would be easier to penetrate. He eventually positioned himself in the Negev desert, well within Israel's borders. Several days later, el-Shazly again did the impossible: a night march (along with mechanized units and tanks) from his position in Israel all the way to the Suez Canal. This was a virtually impossible maneuver considering he had no air support nor intelligence, but managed to succeed with only a few casualties. In recognition of his feats, he was granted command of the paratroopers and Sa'ka ("Thunderbolt") Forces and later the chief of staff position. As chief of staff, el-Shazly worked closely with Minister of Defense Ahmad Ismail Ali to optimize the Egyptian army for the 1973 offensive into Sinai. On top of military skill, he was known to be a headstrong individual who was not afraid to speak his mind to superiors. This got him into conflict on several occasions with President Sadat during and after the Yom Kippur War, eventually leading to his dismissal from the military. He was vehemently opposed to Sadat's Camp David Accords in 1978, leading to complete breakaway from Sadat and consequent exile.

Hafez al-Assad

Hafez al-Assad was a Syrian general and politician that served as the country's president in the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Born in 1930 into an Alawite family of Qardaha, al-Assad joined the Arab Ba'ath Party in 1946 and devoted himself to political activism. In 1955, al-Assad graduated from the Syrian military academy and entered the Air Force as a lieutenant. Although he was a very successful officer who rose quickly through the ranks, a career in the military did not satisfy him. He increasingly turned his attention to politics, playing important roles in the 1963 and 1966 coup d'états that solidified his power over the Syrian military. In 1970, Hafez al-Assad took control of Syria altogether through a coup d'état against Salah Jadid. He subsequently launched the Corrective Movement, a program of reforms through which he solidified his hold over Syrian society and the Ba'ath Party. This included giving more power to the ulama (educated Muslim class), liberalizing the radical socialist Syrian economy, and normalizing diplomatic relations with other Arab states like Egypt and Saudi Arabia (Syria was geopolitically isolated during Jadid's rule). In the lead-up to the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Hafez al-Assad was intent on using military options against Israel to get back the Golan Heights as well as fuel nationalistic fervor. This was in stark contrast to Egypt's Sadat who preferred diplomatic solutions, but they eventually agreed that a show of military force would satisfy both of their interests. Hafez al-Assad was otherwise known to be a meticulous and shrewd politician, adept at planning and calculating for political gain as well as knowing how to bide his time for the right moment.

Mustafa Tlass

Mustafa Abdul Qadir Tlass was a Syrian general and politician who served as the Minister of Defense in the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Born in 1932 near the city of Homs, Tlass was an active member of the Ba'ath Party as well as a graduate of the Syrian military academy. He met Hafez al-Assad in the academy, and maintained very close relations with him until al-Assad's death. As Hafez al-Assad solidified his control over Syria through a series of coup d'états, Tlass rose up the ranks alongside him to eventually become Minister of Defense in 1972. For the next 30 years, Tlass dedicated his loyalty to al-Assad by standing at the forefront of suppressing political opposition against him. Tlass is known to have been mediocre as a general but was nonetheless successful in maintaining the cohesion of the Syrian armed forces after years of factionalism and infighting in the pre-Assad period. He is also remembered to have been quite anti-Israel, advocating strongly for the use of military options in Israeli relations.

Yusuf Shakkur

Yusuf Shakkur was a Syrian general that served as the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces during the Yom Kippur War. Born in Homs, he was a graduate of the military academy and enlisted to the Syrian Army. He received further military education in the USSR at Voroshilov Academy, following the path of an elite military officer. After his studies, he served diplomatic roles in Venezuela and Brazil from 1961 to 1964. While Shakkur was not involved in the series of coup d'états that ultimately put Hafez al-Assad to power, Shakkur soon allied with al-Assad and rose to the Chief of Staff position in 1972. Shakkur worked closely with al-Assad and Tlass during the Yom Kippur War. Although al-Assad was known to be a micromanager, it is said that he put significant faith in the capabilities of Shakkur. While being an elite military officer, Shakkur was well-regarded for his diplomatic abilities. He was a central figure in the peace negotiations between Syria and Israel during the 1990's, although it did not come to fruition in the end.

Hussein bin Talal

His Majesty King Hussein bin Talal was the monarch of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Born in Amman in 1935, he received his military education at the Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst in England. Hussein became king in 1952 but his formal accession to the throne was one year later. He was very interested in modernizing his nation, investing in economic, industrial, and livability infrastructures throughout his long reign. In fact, the Jordanians' access to clean water, sanitation, education, and healthcare greatly improved during his time. Unfortunately King Hussein faced a bleaker situation in the diplomatic arena. Soon after his ascension to the throne, the Arab world became dangerously polarized. Traditionalist kingdoms like Jordan and Iraq came into conflict with Nasser-inspired revolutionary republics like Egypt and Syria, and this periodically escalated to military confrontations or assassination attempts that shook up the entire region. Simultaneously, Jordan was still suffering from the crushing defeat of 1967

to Israel and consequent loss of the West Bank. The threat of Israel was still very much alive in the minds of Jordanians. He himself was very weary of war -- he was not opposed to putting past antagonisms behind to ensure peace, but simultaneously recognized the harms of disengaging from the Arab-Israel conflict entirely. He was well aware that his popularity and legitimacy partially depended on the fight against Israel. After the Yom Kippur War, King Hussein devoted himself to peace in the Middle East, particularly with regard to the Israel-Palestine question. He passed away in 1999.

Zaid Rifai

Zaid Rifai was a Jordanian diplomat and politician that served as Prime Minister during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Born in 1936 into an elite family of politicians, his father, Sameer al-Rifai, and his future son, Samir Rifai, both served as Prime Ministers of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. As Prime Minister, he formed four different governments and worked closely with King Hussein during the Yom Kippur War to coordinate Jordan's war effort (or the lack thereof) against Israel. Like his King, Rifai was weary of war and preferred to minimize direct conflict with Israeli forces. On the other hand, he understood that his popularity and his king's legitimacy greatly depended on fighting Israel. Rifai thus made a significant effort to balance the two interests, and upon the end of the Yom Kippur War advocated for Jordan's peace with Israel.

Yuri Andropov

Yuri Andropov was a diplomat and politician of the Soviet Union that served as the chairman of the KGB during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. His first major position as an official of the USSR was in 1954, when he began his service as the Soviet Ambassador to Hungary. He played a major role in suppressing the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, which earned him the favor of high-ranking officials like Leonid Brezhnev. In 1967, after Brezhnev came into power, Andropov was named chairman of the KGB and proceeded to lead clandestine operations for domestic and foreign interests of the USSR. Although Andropov and his KGB actively supported the Arabs throughout the Yom Kippur War, the Soviets were not at all enthusiastic about the conflict itself. The USSR and the United States were in detente at this time, so both sides wanted to avoid crises in the Middle East that would force the two superpowers to take sides. Egypt under Sadat was particularly put off by the USSR's lukewarm attitude, leading to the expulsion of 20,000 Soviet military advisors in 1972. Even when the Soviets heard of Sadat's plans to cross the Suez Canal, they were highly pessimistic about Egypt's chances and dissuaded the attack. Nevertheless, when the war began, Andropov supported the Arab states with massive military aid and even deployed naval forces as Israel began to gain the upper hand.

Houari Boumediène

Houari Boumediène was an Algerian soldier, freedom fighter, and politician that served as the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council of Algeria at the time of the Yom Kippur War. Coming from impoverished origins, he joined the National Liberation Front (FLN) in 1955 to fight for Algerian independence from the French. Upon independence in 1961, Boumediène was appointed defense minister by then leader Ahmed Ben Bella but launched a coup d'état to control Algeria himself in 1965. As a representative of Algeria in the international sphere, Boumediène maintained a non-alignment policy that involved keeping good relations with both communist and capitalist states while pursuing the construction of a third world country bloc that rejects the bipolarity of the Cold War. Furthermore, he provided considerable support to the Arab League during every Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Yom Kippur War.

Yasser Arafat

Yasser Arafat was a Palestinian political figure who served as the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) during the Yom Kippur War. Born in Cairo from Palestinian parents, he picked up Arab nationalism and anti-Zionism while studying in the University of King Fuad I. Arafat subsequently fought in the Arab-Israeli War of 1948 alongside Muslim Brotherhood members rejecting the state of Israel, and founded the paramilitary Palestinian nationalist party Fatah upon his return to Cairo. His sound leadership as well as militant methods against Israel granted him respect and influence in the Arab World, resulting in his election as Chairman of the PLO in 1969. However, Arafat and the Fatah Party was soon forced to relocate from Jordan to Lebanon after King Hussein of Jordan enforced their expulsion. In the lead-up to the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Arafat was made aware of Egypt's invasion plans by Sadat and was entrusted with waging guerilla warfare in the heart of Israel. After the war, Arafat stopped emphasizing militancy and terrorism, favoring instead negotiation and dialogue. He eventually signed the Oslo Accords with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1993.

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