

The Jarring Mission

A Study of the UN Peace Effort in the Middle East, 1967-1971

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MA Thesis in History

Department of Archaeology, Conservation, and History (IAKH)

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List of Abbreviations

Dept St	State Department
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
IDF	Israeli Defence Force
NA	State Department, Central Foreign Policy Files, United States National Archives
NARA	United States National Archives
NEA	Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs
PCC	United Nations Palestinian Conciliation Commission
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
POW	Prisoners of War
SC Res	Security Council Resolution
Sec St	Secretary of State
SYG	Secretary General of the United Nations
UN	United Nations
UNA	United Nations Archives & Record Management Section
UNEF	United Nations Emergency Force
UNOrHist	Oral History Department, Yale University Archives and Manuscripts Library
USINT	United States Interest Section
USUN	United States mission to the United Nations

Theme and Research Questions

In late November 1967, Gunnar Jarring, a Swedish diplomat, was appointed by the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) to serve as a third party in the Arab-Israeli conflict. This was the UN peace effort in the Middle East following the Six-Day War in June 1967. During a period of some three and a quarter years, Jarring and his modest staff shuttled between the representatives from the three countries involved in the talks, namely Israel, Egypt and Jordan. Despite the arduous efforts made by its members, the Jarring mission failed to produce viable results in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The essence of this thesis may be encapsulated in two main questions: Firstly, what role did Gunnar Jarring play in the peace process following the Six-Day War in 1967? And secondly, how can the Jarring mission's lack of tangible results be explained?

In order to provide a meaningful analysis of Jarring's role and the mission's failure to produce results, it has been necessary to focus in detail on the development of the process itself. In order to explore the individual influence of Jarring during the mission, the Jarring mission's potential room for manoeuvre within the given circumstances has been examined. Which structural and contingent factors influenced Jarring's performance and the outcome of the Jarring mission?

In this context, practical politics and power relationships relevant to the Jarring mission have been explored on a regional and an international level. Regionally, the domestic situations in Jordan, Israel and Egypt have been taken into account. In addition, the thesis examines what impact the changed balance of power resulting from the Six-Day War had on the Jarring mission. In a wider context, the extent of influence held by the international community over the Jarring mission has been a focal issue. A meaningful question in this regard is whether an unbiased, impartial and weak third party, like a UN envoy, can achieve results beyond what powerful nations wish for him or her to do.

In comparison with the efforts of the US, the Soviet Union remained rather disengaged from the Middle East diplomacy throughout the Jarring mission. Apart from its close ties to Israel, the stronger party to the conflict, the US therefore held a prominent position as an external actor. As a result, an analysis of the influence of American policy on the Jarring mission is a main theme in this study.

The Phases of the Jarring Mission

This analysis of the Jarring mission falls into three parts: The mission's two active phases separated by an interlude. These three parts constitute the themes of three main chapters. The first phase of the Jarring mission extended from the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 242, 22 November 1967, under which Gunnar Jarring was appointed. On 5 April 1969 Jarring left the position after finding the situation deadlocked and returned to his position as Sweden's ambassador to the Soviet Union. The most salient features of the first phase of the mission are, firstly, that Gunnar Jarring was a rather passive intermediary. For the most part he shuttled conscientiously back and forth between the representatives of Jordan, Egypt and Israel with their messages to one another. He never challenged the benevolence of the adversaries by making key issues central themes in his discussions with their representatives. Secondly, the isolated nature of the Jarring talks with the exclusion of external powers is noteworthy. Not even the permanent members of the UN Security Council seem to have been kept informed of the activities of the mission.

The members of the Jarring mission left the Middle East for a period of sixteen months following the breakdown of the talks in April 1969. This interlude separated the two active phases of the Jarring mission. During this time, the conditions for the Jarring mission altered. New leaderships came to power in both Israel and Egypt, a civil war was fought in Jordan, and the War of Attrition between Israel and Egypt went on across the Suez Canal, affecting the regional situation. In addition, a change of administration took place in the USA. The administration of Lyndon B. Johnson gave way to the Presidency of Richard M. Nixon. The new US administration offered a renewed approach to Middle East diplomacy: The Rogers Plan – a unilateral American peace initiative in June to August 1970 – revived the Jarring Mission and instigated its second phase.

Gunnar Jarring's role was distinctly altered from the first phase to the second. No longer behaving as a telephone cable, or a mail man, as he did during the first phase, Jarring now became an active mediator. In February 1971, Jarring put forward a peace proposal suggesting a solution to central issues of the conflict between Israel and Egypt. It is evident that Jarring's role changed in parallel with the changed degree of American involvement. During the second phase of the Jarring mission, following Richard Nixon inauguration as president, Jarring's contact with the US augmented considerably. While the US involvement increased towards the second phase of the mission, the Soviet activity decreased. Secretary of State, William Rogers, stated that now "all

parties – [Egypt], Jordan, Israel, the Secretary General and Jarring – look to our lead. [...] Soviet activity in all this diplomatic activity has been marginal.”¹

Despite the altered conditions, the parties remained too far apart to enter into an agreement. Jarring again returned to Moscow at the end of March 1971, in effect concluding the mission.

Jarring was largely blamed for the termination of the mission by the participants involved in the talks at the time of events. It seems that the good intentions of Gunnar Jarring were not in doubt, but his personality and his convictions were thought to have led Jarring to miss opportunities that were available to him.² In Jerusalem Jarring was perceived as “an inflexible, unimaginative, and imperturbable man.”³ This negative reading of Jarring was not exclusive to Israel. According to the primary contact of the Jarring mission in Jordan, the foreign minister Abdul Munim Rifai, the Jordanians had an extremely poor opinion of Jarring’s initiative, of his forcefulness and of his negotiating ability. The Jordanians doubted that Jarring personally could bring about successful negotiations.⁴ “That poor man was just not the man for the job”, Rifai commented.⁵ Even within the UN system Jarring’s personal style was criticized. One of Jarring’s closest contacts in the UN, Undersecretary General Ralph Bunche, said that Jarring was simply not an initiator or an innovator. Moreover, Bunche found that Jarring lacked that crucial characteristic of a successful mediator.⁶

In order to provide a fundament for some important themes upon which this analysis of the Jarring mission has been based, some theoretical foundations for a mediator’s role and approach will be explored early on.⁷

Role and Approach of a Mediator

Different conflicts may require different managing skills and methods. In the intractable conflict between Arabs and Israelis the prospects for direct negotiations have been small. The involvement of a mediator therefore seems to provide the best scenario for communication. The purpose of mediation is to reach a diplomatic solution to a conflict which the adversaries cannot find by themselves. A mediator should not help one side to acquire its goals, but should strive for

¹ United States National Archives (NA), box 2072, 5 February 1971: memorandum from the Secretary to the President

² NA, box 1809, 14 May 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary

³ Rabin, Yitzhak: *The Rabin Memoirs*, 1996: p.179; Shlaim, Avi: *The Iron Wall*, 2001: p. 261

⁴ NA, box 1806, 13 March 1968: cable from Symmes, Amman to the Secretary

⁵ NA, box 1807, 3 April 1968: cable from Symmes, Amman to the Secretary

⁶ NA, box 1808, 22 April 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary

⁷ In this thesis, the role performed by Jarring will be termed *mediator*. This implies a generally recognized use of the word. For instance in the UN, the term is reserved for intermediaries who not only make procedural suggestions, but who also contribute with substantive proposals for the settlement of a dispute. Gunnar Jarring may perhaps be called facilitator during most of the Jarring mission since he did not propose a settlement to the substantive issues of the conflict until the very end of his mission, but rather facilitated contact. This distinction will, however, not be made here. Skjelsbæk, Kjell: “The UN Secretary-General and the Mediation of International Dispute” in *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1991: p.110

a result that is acceptable to all the adversaries. A mediator does not possess the ability to use force in order to reach an agreement, nor are the adversaries committed in advance to accept any suggestions made by the mediator.⁸

There may be a clear connection between the performance of the go-between and the outcome of the mediation.⁹ Mediators can carry out different sorts of tasks and the different types of mediators are often distinguished by the degree of their involvement.¹⁰ Here, three different categories are proposed: The mediator as communicator, as formulator and as manipulator.¹¹ There is therefore a wide scope for participation by a third party within a passive line of communication, as opposed to active, directive mediation. The former does not allow the mediator to contribute with substance, while the latter is substantively engaged in the mediation process, pushing and pulling the adversaries into the acceptance of a solution.¹² Where can Jarring be placed between these extremes? And which of these above mentioned strategies were accessible to Jarring?

Jarring was a weak and unbiased mediator: As a representative of the UN, Jarring possessed no leverage or physical resources to force an agreement on the parties to the conflict.¹³ Jarring's impartiality was secured through the UN Charter, upon which the organization is based. His neutrality was further emphasised by his nationality. Sweden was a small country and geographically isolated from the Arab-Israeli conflict. It was also non-aligned in the Cold War. This may have led to the perception that Jarring's background indicated that he had no direct preference as to how the conflict should be solved.

A traditional view is that mediators are more likely to succeed if they are unbiased and weak. According to this view, the inability to influence the mediation directly by the use of carrots or sticks is the strength of the weak and unbiased mediator. Such a third party may encourage the thrust from all sides, which may in turn facilitate agreement.¹⁴ This view has been challenged by scholars who argue that mediators representing a biased or strong third party are equally well suited, and perhaps

⁸ Touval, Saadia: *The Peace Brokers. Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979*, 1982: p.4; Touval, Saadia and Zartman, I. William: "Mediation in International Conflict" in Kessel, Kenneth & Pruitt, Dean C: *Mediation Research*, 1989: p.117

⁹ Bercovitch, Jacob: "Conflict Management and the Oslo Experience" in *International Negotiation: A Journal of Theory and Practice*, no 2, 1997: p.228; Bercovitch, Jacob and Houston, Allison "Why do They do it like This? An Analysis of the Factors Influencing Mediation Behaviour in International Conflicts" in *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 44, no 2, 2000: p.175; Zartman, William: "Bargaining and Conflict Reduction" in All, Pamela, Chester Crocker and Fen Olser Hampson (eds.): *In Managing Global Chaos: Sources and Responses to International Conflict*, 1996: p.279

¹⁰ Bercovitch and Houston, 2000: p.175; Zartman, 1996: p.279

¹¹ Based on Zartman's categories: Zartman, 1996: p.279

¹² Touval, 1982: pp.4-6; Zartman, 1996: pp.279-283

¹³ Skjelsbæk, 1991: p.104

¹⁴ Kydd, Andrew: "Which Side Are You On? Bias, Credibility and Mediation" in *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol.47, no.4, 2003: p.598; Smith, James D. D: "Mediator Impartiality: Banishing the Chimera" in *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 31, no. 4, 1994: p.445

even better suited, to succeed in reaching an agreement.¹⁵ In correspondence with this view one may argue that the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict shows that a weak and unbiased mediator does not constitute the recipe for success. Although impartiality may bring about the trust of all parties concerned, being a weak and unbiased mediator implies restrictions on the possible kinds of involvement.¹⁶

A weak and unbiased mediator is well placed to serve as a channel of communication. The communicator may carry messages and other information accurately between the adversaries, with the aim of clearing up misunderstandings by transmitting information believed to be more reliable than that conveyed through other channels, such as the media. A weak and unbiased mediator may also be fit to act as a formulator. The aim of a formulator is to provide innovative thinking on the subjects in question in order to attempt to navigate around the constraining commitments of the adversaries. Jarring has been referred to as merely a mailbox, because he spent the lion's share of his mission transmitting messages and proposals. He very rarely presented any documents that had not been approved by the parties in advance. This indicates that he simply filled the role of a communicator, restraining himself from entering into unacceptable lines of approach with the adversaries. Nevertheless, Jarring was more than a figurative telephone cable, and as we shall see, his degree of involvement increased during the course of the mission. However, this thesis argues that the full range of strategies was not available for Jarring to choose from.

In certain conflicts the benefits of an agreed outcome do not outweigh the advantages of continued conflict for one or more adversaries. The mediator then needs to demonstrate the attractiveness of a solution to the adversaries in order to reach an agreement. This goal can be accomplished by making the consequences of rejecting mediation more significant through political means. The risk or threat of strained relations with the intermediary or other sponsors to the process sometimes is enough to make a settlement of the conflict the most attractive option. Certain situations require the use of physical compulsion in order to carry out effective manipulation, such as withholding resources from the adversaries in order to push them into making concessions. Moreover, sometimes the situation requires a promise to deliver some kind of side payments in order to raise the value of the outcome and thereby sweeten the bitter pill of compromise. The mediator

¹⁵ Bercovitch and Houston, 2000: p.175; Bercovitch, Jacob and Houston, Allison: "Influence of Mediator Characteristics and Behaviour on the Success of Mediation in International Relations" in *The International Journal of Conflict Management*, 1993: p.317;

Touval, 1982: pp.10-19; Zartman, 1996: p.281

¹⁶ Touval, 1982: pp.10-19

who acts as a manipulator thus needs to possess considerable resources, and be substantively engaged in the mediation process in order to change the conflict situation.¹⁷

Jarring acted as both communicator and formulator, but he lacked the coercive or persuasive resources that a mediator of power possesses, which is necessary to act as a manipulator. The adversaries could leave the negotiations at any time and dismiss Jarring should he say or do anything they disliked or found inappropriate, or that was perceived as biased behaviour.¹⁸ He had no means to keep them in the negotiating process, or to weigh in on them to make concessions. He had to rely on his personal qualities and skills to build trust and to communicate, and thus depended on his own personality to see him through the process. Jarring did launch certain initiatives with the prior consent of the parties, and at the very end of the Jarring mission he actually put forward a substantial proposal, but he did not succeed in presenting an agreement that was considered as favourable by the Israelis as it was by the Arabs.

In mediation theory literature, numerous factors are said to influence whether a mediator succeeds or fails. The personal qualities of the mediator are often mentioned as crucial for the outcome of mediation.¹⁹ The adversaries' ability to trust the mediator is, to a great extent, associated with his or her personal qualities. Impartiality has in this connection been rendered an important quality in a mediator, and as we have seen, Jarring fitted well into this picture. Knowledge of the conflict, tact, intelligence, persuasiveness and patience are other personal qualities regarded as decisive for the mediator's ability to perform the tasks of the communicator, the formulator and the manipulator.²⁰

Gunnar Jarring did not, as mentioned above, have any direct interests as to the outcome of the conflict apart from personal achievement and reputation. He was not an expert on the Arab-Israeli conflict, but he had knowledge of the area in general. During the Second World War, Jarring was stationed at the Swedish embassy in Turkey working with the surveillance of the military development in the Middle East. During his time as the Swedish ambassador to the UN, Jarring acquired further knowledge on the conflict. From the sideline, Jarring watched the UN's handling of the Suez Crisis in 1956, and was later actively involved in the aftermath once Sweden took its seat on the Security Council in 1957. His two years on the Security Council also provided Jarring with

¹⁷ Touval, 1982: pp.4-6; Zartman, 1996: pp.279-283

¹⁸ Smith, 1994: p.447

¹⁹ Bercovitch and Houston, 1993; Touval, 1982

²⁰ *ibid*

experience as a mediator. In 1957 he became the Security Council's representative to the Kashmir conflict.²¹

From Jarring's time on the Security Council, the UN Secretary General Maha Thray Sithu U Thant (U Thant) got to know Jarring well. Through observing his effort in Kashmir, U Thant knew Jarring's negotiating style. U Thant preferred this form of negotiation, and particularly appreciated Jarring's discretion.²² In fact, Jarring was often called "the clam" by reporters and colleagues for never disclosing any sensitive news.²³ Jarring's diplomatic experience was further developed as he became the Swedish ambassador to Washington and later to Moscow.²⁴ He was well known and esteemed in Washington and had a good relationship with the authorities in Moscow.²⁵

However experienced he was in the machinery of the UN and the capitals of the superpowers, the qualities pertaining to his personality per se might not have been equally suited for the task. Gunnar Jarring was a man of the academic world. He held a doctor's degree in Turkic languages and continued to work in this field until his death in 2002.²⁶ This background may have influenced his way of thought and conduct. The Israeli UN ambassador at the outset of the Jarring mission, Gideon Rafael, portrays Jarring as

a quiet man, more of a scholar than a dashing diplomat. [...] It was far easier for him to understand the fine nuances of Turcomanish dialects than the subtleties of oriental politics. He understood what the contenders said but not always what they meant. He was a cautious man, launching his rare initiatives only with the prior consent of the parties. Undeniably he was studious and conscientious in his efforts to help clarify the controversial issues, but he lacked the boldness needed to summon Israel and the Arab states to a peace conference. It eluded him, probably because of his inclination to disentangle painstakingly every thread of the Gordian knot, instead of cutting it with one well-aimed stroke.²⁷

²¹ The Kashmir conflict is a territorial dispute between China, India, and Pakistan over the northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent. The dispute arose when the British domination of India came to an end in 1947. Two new nations were established: secular India and Islamic Pakistan. After the first war over Kashmir between India and Pakistan in 1947, the area was divided between the two countries through the help of the UN: Two thirds fell to India and one third to Pakistan. Kashmir became the only Indian state with a Muslim majority. Therefore, Pakistan claimed that it belonged to Islamic Pakistan. India held that the Indian secular rule included all religions, and that there was no problem inherent in the religious question. India has fought four wars over Kashmir: three wars with Pakistan: in 1947, 1965, and 1999, and one with China in 1962. Kashmir's inhabitants seek an independent state, which brings a third dimension to the conflict. Gunnar Jarring was appointed the Security Council's representative on this question in 1957, and spent March and April of that year in India and Pakistan on behalf of the Security Council.

²² Interview with Göran Berg, 7 December 2006

²³ Interview with Göran Berg, 7 December 2006; <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P1-53302618.html> (22 February 2007)

²⁴ Oral History Department, Yale University Archives and Manuscript Library (UNOrHist), Krasno, Jean: Interview with Gunnar Jarring, 1990: p.6; <http://orient4.orient.su.se/centralasia/JarringBiografi.dok> (27 February 2007)

²⁵ Rafael, Gideon: *Destination Peace. Three Decades of Israeli Foreign Policy*, 1981: p.193

²⁶ <http://orient4.orient.su.se/centralasia/JarringBiografi.dok> (27 February 2007)

²⁷ Rafael, 1981: p.193

Compared with former and later mediators to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Jarring's manner does seem cautious and scholarly based. His style was obviously "a far cry from that of the American go-getter".²⁸ His communications with the adversaries were typically of a "black-and-white, no-nonsense" character.²⁹ According to another participant, the assets of a reserved, taciturn man of a prototypical Scandinavian nature – slow and deliberate – were perhaps not the best assets to deal with the actors in the Middle East conflict, where "the passions and sensitivities, the instincts of wounded pride and frustrated hope [...] had sharpened the intensity of [the] region's emotional life".³⁰ His diplomatic experience might have been distinguished in theory, yet not so much in practice.

The Room for Manoeuvre

The ability of a mediator to earn the trust and respect of the adversaries is important in conflict resolution, yet the outcome of mediation does not solely depend on the personal qualities of the mediator. Mediation does not take place in a vacuum. Jarring was the representative of the UN, not a superpower. He could not force a solution on unwilling parties. The power structures, globally and locally, had a crucial impact on Jarring's role and the outcome of the Jarring mission.

The Six-Day War in June 1967 was a watershed in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and changed the balance of power in the region. Israel won the war by defeating the joint troops of Egypt, Jordan and Syria.³¹ At the end of the Six-Day War, Israel had taken control of the Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank, formerly areas under Jordanian, Egyptian and Syrian control. The outcome of the war thus led to an increased asymmetry of economical, military and moral power between Israel and its neighbouring Arab states.

The aftermath of the Six-Day War constituted an uncomfortable situation for Egypt and Jordan. The Israeli army was revealed once again as clearly superior, and the forces of Jordan and Egypt were left in a weak position. The situation constituted both a security threat and a moral and economic blow to the two Arab countries. The search for a solution was, therefore, an economic and military necessity for Egypt and Jordan. A prolonged conflict would only hurt them further. For the Israelis, entering into a search for peace was based on a political choice because Israel was in a position to raise arms once again. Israel stood in a very strong bargaining position, the only genuinely unfavourable element was international criticism. However, there was no harsh criticism

²⁸ Rafael, 1981: p.195

²⁹ Rabin, 1979: p.192

³⁰ Eban, Abba: *An Autobiography*, 1978: p.454

³¹ See chapter 2: pp.20-23

from its superpower ally, nor a united condemnation from the UN. Jordan and Egypt may have been willing to reach an agreement because the cost of continued conflict was high. However the Israelis did not run the risk of losing much by keeping the status quo. Moreover, we shall see that Israel hoped to gain the occupied territories, to create facts on the ground, by letting time pass.

The UN and Jarring could not change the asymmetry of power. Such a role can only be taken by a third party of considerable independent strength.³² Other actors may lend the mediator diplomatic or other support, potential or actual, to promote a solution. Or, on the contrary, they can impede the peace efforts by encouraging uncompromising behaviour on behalf of the adversaries. The superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, may be more effective than the UN because they could, implicitly or explicitly, threaten with punishments or promise rewards to the parties to a conflict.³³ In fact, the UN was nearly paralyzed on certain issues, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, because both superpowers held veto power in the Security Council. Little could be accomplished through the UN without a level of agreement at the Security Council.³⁴ The Cold War was in a period of détente, yet in some areas, such as the Middle East, the superpowers did not refrain from vying for influence. The superpowers may have been concerned with following their own global interests to a larger degree than they pursued the objective of peace in the Middle East. The containment of the opposing power was a weighty factor when their Middle East policies were formed.

The Six-Day War increased Soviet's influence with the Arabs when the special American commitment to Israel became obvious following the war. Egypt was provided with Soviet arms to help even out the vast asymmetry of power. However, the Egyptians did not receive the most modern Soviet weapon systems, and when they finally were supplied with new technology, Soviet personnel were sent to operate it. Consequently, the Israeli army, supplied with American first-rate weapons, was always superior to the armies of Jordan and Egypt.³⁵ Henry Kissinger, President Nixon's National Security adviser during the mission commented on this asymmetric situation by stating: "Nobody could make peace without [the US]. Only [the US], not the Soviet Union, could exert influence on Israel. Israel was too strong to succumb to Arab military pressure."³⁶ The Director-General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry emphasised this view when asserting that "there were two keys [...] which could unlock the deadlock in the Middle East. One was global, held by the

³² See Waage, Hilde Henriksen: *'Peacemaking is a Risky Business' Norway's role in the Peace Process in the Middle East*, 2004.

³³ Skjelsbæk, 1991: p.112

³⁴ UNOrHist: Krasno, 1990: p.19; Urquhart, Brian: *Ralph Bunche. An American Life*, 1993: p.417

³⁵ Slater, Jerome: "The Superpowers and an Arab-Israeli Political Settlement: The Cold War Years" in *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 105, No. 4, 1990-1991: p.567

³⁶ Kissinger, Henry, *The White House Years*, 1979: p.378

United States. The other was regional, held by Israel. Nothing could happen internally in the area against Israel's will, because of its military preponderance."³⁷ The outcome of the Jarring mission seems to have depended on the activities of the US, or the lack of such.

The Pieces of the Puzzle

Although it was one of the most important peace efforts after the Six-Day War, not much has been written about the Jarring mission as such. This can probably be accredited to the final failure of the mission. It seems the literature often focuses on the so-called successful peace efforts in the Middle East. To provide a detailed account of the Jarring mission has been a challenging puzzle, as it has never been carefully explored. This is the first thorough study based on broad archival research.

The Jarring Mission in the Literature

Both published and unpublished material have been used to fill out the blanks encountered while exploring the Jarring mission. Numerous works of the history of the Middle East mention the UN peace effort under Jarring, and some of those books and articles have been used as a background for this thesis. However, these books rarely dedicate more than a few lines to the Jarring mission. Two publications, written shortly after the events, deal exclusively with the Jarring mission. One of these is a report submitted by the UN Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, to the Security Council in 1973 giving an account of the Jarring mission.³⁸ *The Waldheim Report* is a descriptive account outlining some, but not all, activities of the Jarring mission. It does not offer any attempts at evaluation. The information given in the report should be reliable, considering the Secretary General's access to the material accumulated at the UN. However, the picture given in the report is not representative of Jarring's efforts. Very few conversations between Jarring and the few UN officials with whom he discussed the mission were recorded. The meetings held between the Secretary General U Thant and Jarring were often held privately, and without transcripts because of the risk of leaks of sensitive information. Jarring's own assessments were therefore probably not available to Kurt Waldheim. In addition, sensitive information could not be released in a report so close to the events.

The other is an article written by Bernhard Reich published in the *Wiener Library Bulletin* in 1972.³⁹ It provides a useful source of facts crucial for establishing an overview of the Jarring

³⁷ Rafael, 1981: p.207

³⁸ Waldheim, Kurt: "The search for peace in the Middle East: The Waldheim Report" in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol 2, no 4/1973

³⁹ Reich, Bernhard: "The Jarring Mission and the Search for Peace in the Middle East" in *Wiener Library Bulletin [Great Britain]*, no 26, 1972

mission. The article is a very summary account of what happened, not exhaustive as such, and it does not offer a thorough analysis as to what the problems of the mission were. Reich's article is influenced by its closeness to the events, restricting the availability of sources for the work vastly. Only a few official UN and US foreign policy documents were used as sources along with various newspaper articles and secondary literature.

The most thorough analysis of the literature used in this thesis is Saadia Touval's *The Peace Brokers*. One chapter of this book is dedicated to the Jarring mission, analyzing its background, its course, and its failure. Although the chapter offers a good analysis of the Jarring mission, Touval fails to document his claims and conclusions in primary sources, only three UN documents are referred to apart from secondary literature. In addition, these three sources are official documents of the UN available to the public. This is a very meagre background upon which to draw any conclusions. Hardly any of the records relevant for the period had been released in 1982, when the book was written. This would suggest a fundamental weakness in the most analytical study written on the issue.

Some memoirs and autobiographies written by people close to the events have also been helpful. Gideon Rafael wrote rather extensively about the Jarring mission in his book *Destination Peace*.⁴⁰ The pages dealing with the events and surroundings of the Jarring mission have been useful as a description of the mission, and as an insight into the Israeli point of view. The same can be said of Abba Eban's book *An Autobiography*, where the author dedicated a chapter to the events surrounding the Jarring mission.⁴¹ Both authors were part of Israeli decision making at the time, as director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry and as Israel's Foreign Minister respectively. All biographical accounts are biased. However, one may argue that this is especially true in the extremely polarized situation in the Middle East where few authors are close to being neutral. This offers particular challenges because the accounts picture only the opinions and attitudes of one side, which is often coloured by their political position. This must be taken into consideration when using such an account as a source.

Israeli historians working with the Arab-Israeli conflict are often divided into two schools: "new historians" and "old historians".⁴² The new historians are a loosely defined group of left-wing historians who from the late 1980s on provided revisions of the traditional Israeli or Zionist interpretation of the realities of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In addition to thoroughly researching the history of Israel, the Palestinians and the Middle East conflict, the new historians take a critical

⁴⁰ See Rafael, 1981

⁴¹ Eban, 1978

⁴² Shlaim, Avi: "The Debate about 1948" in Pappé, Ilan: *The Israel/Palestine Question*, 1999: p.171

stance towards the old historians' version of the events. A changing political climate may have promoted this revisionism. In addition, the revisionism was a result of the declassification of Israeli foreign policy documents. The recent Israeli documentation of the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict is therefore to a large degree based on broad archival research, and offers a good background for analysis and discussion.⁴³

The above mentioned Israeli accounts of the Jarring mission, written by Rafael and Eban, may serve as an exemplification of one school of Israeli historians. "Old historians" is the term used to classify a group of mainly non-professional historians providing traditional and Zionist accounts of the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. These accounts are, with few exceptions, not based on archival research, and often provide a version much less critical of Israel's actions than that of the new historians.⁴⁴ Abba Eban and Gideon Rafael may be termed old historians because they were non-professional historians writing their accounts without the use of state documents, and outside the revisionist tradition. Despite this, they are not necessarily uncritical and certainly not uninformed of the events of the Jarring mission. They were indeed part of the decision making process in Israel at the time in question. However, it is important to keep in mind their political orientation and the tradition in which they wrote when using their memoirs as sources in order to present as balanced an account of the Jarring mission as possible.

The Arab side does not offer an equal revision of traditional presentations of the history of the conflict, and there is much less literature on Egypt and Jordan and their positions as compared to what is available from Israel. The Israeli decision makers at the time and other leading individuals have to a much larger extent than the Egyptians and Jordanians, written in English. Furthermore, the Arab countries do not have similar rules for declassification as in Israel.⁴⁵ As a result, little access is allowed to the relevant Arab archives. This is a serious problem for research. It may be argued that an account of the peace diplomacy following the 1967 is not possible without access to Arab state archives. However, some documents are available, in addition to first hand accounts like diaries and memoirs from politicians and soldiers.⁴⁶ One has to take into consideration the different base upon which the Arab and Israeli accounts are made when analysing the Jarring mission, and hopefully this awareness will provide for a fair presentation of the process.

Further, other actors involved in process, directly or indirectly, have given their biographical accounts valuable to this thesis. These include, amongst other things, parts of Henry Kissinger's *The White House Years*, UN Undersecretary General Brian Urquhart's *Ralph Bunche, an American Life*,

⁴³ Shlaim, 1999: p.172-174

⁴⁴ Shlaim, 1999: p.171

⁴⁵ Shlaim, 1999: p.175

⁴⁶ Shlaim, 1999: p.175

Secretary General U Thant's *View from the UN*, and the Israeli ambassador to Washington Yitzhak Rabin's *The Rabin Memoirs*. These too must be regarded as biased accounts, which imply the same reservations as above.

Primary Sources

The topic and approach of this thesis has made it natural to explore US archival resources. Both the UN archives and the United States National Archives have been visited. A plausible assumption was that some of the most important material for this study was to be found at the UN Archives and Records Management section in New York. Yet not much of relevance was found. The UN archive has a 20-year declassification rule.⁴⁷ Despite this, extremely few documents were declassified from the time in question when research was done during 2005 for this thesis, more than 30 years after the events. Thus most of the documents found at the UN Archives were unclassified material. Many of these documents are available at the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL).⁴⁸ If access would have been granted at the UN archives to all material collected there, it is not likely that records from important meetings between Gunnar Jarring and UN officials would have been found. As mentioned, careful to avoid leakage, Jarring insisted on keeping many conversations off the record.⁴⁹ Thus, Jarring's own assessments might have only been found in his personal notes of the process, which I have not been able to uncover.

A UN oral history interview with Gunnar Jarring has been of great importance for this study.⁵⁰ However, the interview was undertaken in 1991, and thus far removed in time from the Jarring mission. The retrospective view with which Jarring comments the mission, might entail that his renditions of details and fact are not precise and trustworthy. In addition, Jarring's evaluations of what happened at the time of events may not be rendered accurately. However, the interview represents a useful account of how Gunnar Jarring viewed his efforts in retrospect.

The main bulk and the most important primary sources used are documents from the United States National Archives at College Park in Maryland (NARA). The American intelligence services are extremely thorough. Much of the information needed for this thesis was available at the US National Archives. The documents used are from the general records of the State Department,

⁴⁷ http://archives.un.org/unarms/doc/Guideline_on_Information_Sensitivity.doc (19 March 2007)

⁴⁸ <http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf>

⁴⁹ UNOrHist: Krasno, 1990: p.20; Interview with Göran Berg, 7 December 2006

⁵⁰ The UN oral history project transcript is part of a project sponsored by the Institute for Social and Policy Studies of Yale University to document significant events in the history of the United Nations and its operations. Interviewees include U.N. officials, ambassadors from various countries, and other participants in the events documented. The transcripts are available on file at the UN Dag Hammarskjöld and Yale University libraries, where they are available for research purposes.

central foreign policy files. The documents are mainly in the form of cables, memos, and intelligence reports, along with some newspaper clippings from the period regarding the Jarring mission. Most of the documents have never been published, though some may be found in the published collection of US foreign policy documents *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS). Only one volume of FRUS is relevant for this thesis, “Volume XX, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1967-68”. American documents regarding the remaining three years of the Jarring mission are currently being researched, annotated, and prepared for publication.⁵¹

The State Department has documented the work of the Jarring mission in detail and holds extensive information about the positions of all parties concerned: Israel, Egypt, Jordan, the UN, to a certain extent the Soviet Union, and, naturally, the US. There are naturally limits to the American access to Egyptian decisions, considering the fact that Egypt broke off its diplomatic relations with the US during the Six-Day War in 1967. As a result, there was no American embassy in Egypt during the time of the Jarring mission. However, the Americans established a US Interest Section at the Spanish Embassy in Cairo.⁵² The documents found at the National Archives indicate that the Americans were well informed as to what was going on in Egypt through its contacts in Cairo. It seems like the principal officer at the US Interest Section in Cairo, Donald C. Bergus, also had direct contact with representatives of the Egyptian government. The US government had good connections to the Jordanian government through the American ambassador to Jordan, Harrison M. Symmes. Thus, the State Department documents also give a good picture of the Jordanian positions during the Jarring mission. No previous account of the Jarring mission has been based on the documents found at NARA.

The American National Archives thus provide solid materials on the attitudes and positions of all three countries concerned, and have therefore been chosen as the main archive. There is, however, a problem with this one-sided source material. The fact that one side depicted all parties concerned may have influenced this account. Firstly, the focus of the approach of this study may have been influenced by the issues and problems viewed as most important in the US. These may not necessarily have been the same as those concerns perceived as crucial to Egypt, Jordan, and perhaps even to Israel. One must therefore take into consideration the political stances of the US during the Middle East conflict when reading the documents. One must constantly be aware of the fact that the US was allied with Israel, and therefore may have presented an uneven picture in favour of Israel. Furthermore, the US naturally held more information on Israel than on Egypt and Jordan, as it had

⁵¹ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/> (30 March 2007)

⁵² See <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,876679-2,00.html> (25 April 2007); <http://cairo.usembassy.gov/ambassador/amambs.htm> (25 April 2007)

much closer relations with Israel. This has led to an uneven amount of material on the three countries in question. Secondly, using the US as source for information entails that the information of the positions and attitudes of the parties to the conflict were not first hand accounts. The contents may have been altered from the original source to the American presentation.

One may therefore argue that the scope of documents explored is too narrow to provide a thorough analysis of the Jarring mission. There must be more material on the Jarring mission in other archives. It would have been an advantage to widen the range of sources by visiting the Israeli, Jordanian and Egyptian state archives. Valuable primary material is certainly to be found in the Israeli State Archive.⁵³ However, besides the language barrier in all three countries, the time framework for an MA thesis and thus the scope of the study does not allow for a thorough investigation of the above mentioned archives. In addition, the lack of access to the Arab sources would not have made a trip to Egypt and Jordan very helpful, and the Israeli positions are covered thoroughly in the US National Archives. Although the representation of sources could probably have been more balanced than they are here, the material would inevitably be asymmetric to a certain extent. Nevertheless, the difficulties connected to this fact should not be interpreted as insurmountable. However, it has been of great importance to be aware of this imbalance of information and the problems connected to a one-sided source material. Hopefully this awareness has helped the author of this study to present the Jarring mission and draw conclusions as balanced, nuanced and as empirically correct as possible.

Some of the chapters of this thesis have been based on already existing literature. Primary material was collected mainly for the two active phases of the Jarring mission. However, this does not imply that the interpretations of the chapters based on secondary material are not affected by the reading of primary sources. The extensive work with previously unexploited primary materials may put what we previously thought we knew into a somewhat different perspective.

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This thesis has a chronological structure. Chapter 2 introduces the reader to the historical background, and thus places Gunnar Jarring in the history of peace efforts in the Middle East. Furthermore the appointment of Gunnar Jarring, his mandate and the initial reactions of the parties to the mission will be dealt with in this chapter. Chapter 3 presents and discusses the first phase of the Jarring mission. Chapter 4 explores the inactive phase of the Jarring mission, and studies how the conditions changed for the Jarring mission between the two active phases. Chapter 5 explores the second and last phase of the mission. Finally, chapter 6 presents

⁵³ An article will presumably be written by the joint efforts of Professor Hilde Henriksen Waage and the author of this study, partly based on this thesis, which will include material from the Israeli State Archive.

concluding remarks and eventually sees the Jarring mission in connection with other, preceding and succeeding, peace initiatives in order to recognize structures and strategies of the actors in enduring conflicts.

The Road to the Jarring Mission

The Arab-Israeli conflict had existed for about twenty years when the Jarring mission made its entry into the Middle East diplomacy. Throughout the history of the conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbouring states, several external actors have been involved in the quest for peace. The Jarring mission was the main international peace effort in the area following the Six-Day War in 1967. This chapter aims to place the Jarring mission in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and to explore how power relations relevant to the Middle East conflict had developed during the nearly twenty years of conflict and peace efforts preceding the Jarring mission. The immediate aftermath of the Six-Day War, and the foundations and prelude for the Jarring mission will also be investigated.

International Involvement in the Past

When the war broke out in June 1967, the friction between Israel and the surrounding Arab world had been going on with varying intensity since the prelude to the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. The UN had dealt with the question of Palestine for the first time in April 1947. Ever since, the organization became a recurring actor in the area. UN Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947 recommended the partition of the former British mandate of Palestine into an Israeli state consisting of 55 percent of the territory, and an Arab state consisting of the remaining 45 percent, with Jerusalem under international control.¹ The resolution set up a Jewish state and gave it international legitimacy. The Jewish actors accepted the UN partition plan. Just having survived the Holocaust, their dream of an independent state had come true. The Palestinian Arabs found the resolution unjust and rejected it. They could not understand why they had to abandon half of their country to immigrants from Europe.

Following the UN vote, the situation in Palestine deteriorated rapidly with violent Arab guerrilla operations and Jewish countermeasures, in addition to an escalation of Jewish attacks on the Mandatory Power – Great Britain.² The state of Israel was proclaimed on the 14th May 1948, and the following day the first war between Israel and its Arab neighbours broke out, when troops from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq invaded the newly established state. The efforts to solve the difficult situation resulting from the war included bilateral armistice negotiations between Israel and

¹ See map p.129; Neff, Donald: *Fallen Pillars. US Policy towards Palestine and Israel since 1945*, 1995: pp. 45-52

² Shlaim, 2001: pp. 27-31

Egypt, which ended in an armistice agreement. The agreement between Egypt and Israel opened the way for similar bilateral negotiations between Israel and the three Arab states Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.³

The armistice negotiations between Israel and Egypt were held on the Island of Rhodes under the auspices of UN envoy Ralph Bunche. The common understanding of the 1949 armistice agreements have been that they were reached exclusively due to the efforts of Ralph Bunche on Rhodes.⁴ However, recent research shows that this observation was incorrect.⁵ UN Secretary General Trygve Lie, American President Harry S Truman and the State Department were actively engaged in the 1949 negotiations, acting as manipulators behind the scenes in order to prevent the negotiations from breaking down. Enticements and economic and political pressure were used on Egypt and Israel to assist Bunche's efforts. There would probably not have been an agreement unless these powerful actors had influenced the course of the negotiations.⁶

The UN negotiated armistice agreements were considered a success. The agreements were intended to serve as a step on the road to peace, but not in one single case were the agreements forerunners to the achievement of formal peace.⁷ As time passed, the armistice agreements became international law. They could not be annulled, only replaced by peace accords.⁸ By negotiating the armistice agreements, the UN again demonstrated its acceptance of the new state of Israel, but at the same time, it sealed the fate of the UN partition plan by neglecting the Palestinian cause. The planned Palestinian state died before it came into being. Through the agreements, the new state Israel had increased its territory to 77 percent of former Palestine. Egypt was in control of the Gaza-strip, Jordan occupied the West Bank, and Israel controlled the rest of what should have been the territory of the proposed Palestinian state.⁹

The immediate crisis had passed, but the tension remained. After the 1949 armistice agreements had been signed, it became clear that Israel on the one side and Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria on the other held different interpretations of the armistice agreements. The UN General Assembly had in December 1948 appointed the US, France and Turkey to serve as the Palestinian Conciliation Commission (PCC).¹⁰ In April 1949 Israel and the Arab neighboring states were invited

³ Shlaim, 2001: pp.41-47, Næser, Ingrid: *Right versus Might. A Study of the Armistice Negotiations between Israel and Egypt in 1949*, 2005: pp.97-104

⁴ Ralph Bunche was an American professor of political science and a former State Department official. He had as a result close ties to decision makers in the American government.

⁵ See chapter 3: pp.46-47

⁶ Næser, 2005: pp.2; 76; 106

⁷ Næser, 2005: p.1; Shlaim, 2001: p.47; Touval, 1982: p. 55

⁸ Næser, 2005: p.1

⁹ Shlaim, 2001: p.45

¹⁰ Touval, 1982: p.80

by the PCC to a peace conference at Lausanne in order to attempt to reconcile the different interpretations, and to convert the armistice agreements into peace treaties. However, Israel aimed to preserve the status quo after the war, a situation that was totally unacceptable to the Arab countries. They wanted Israeli forces to withdraw to the borders stipulated in the UN partition plan from 1947, which they had rejected at the time.¹¹ At Lausanne, the American members of the PCC exerted strong pressure on the Israelis to make concessions to the Arabs. However, Israel spent the conference warding off US pressure and finally succeeded in retaining the status quo. The conference ended inconclusively in September 1949.¹² During the early 1950s, the PCC continued to deal with the key issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, the commission ceased to function without achieving any lasting results.¹³ This signalled the inability of the UN to produce results in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The peace efforts following the 1948 war thus failed to generate lasting results.

On the contrary, a new crisis soon developed. On 26 July 1956 Egypt's president Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Company, representing a powerful blow to Western interests.¹⁴ In addition, Egypt's recent opening towards Eastern influence was seen as dangerous by the Western powers.¹⁵ In October that same year, Egypt was attacked by Israel as a result of a secret conspiracy between Great Britain, France and Israel. The attack was planned to function as a pretext for the two western powers to intervene to protect their interests in the Suez Canal. The United States reacted strongly to what its two close allies were doing in the Middle East in cooperation with Israel. The Americans initiated intense diplomacy in the UN for the adoption of a resolution to stop the aggression, even though this meant opposing its allies. The belligerency was ultimately halted by joint superpower pressure on the aggressors through the UN, and by American economic pressure.¹⁶ Israel was forced to withdraw unconditionally from the Sinai Peninsula. However, the Cold War concerns of the US were overriding the importance of the complex regional situation. Egypt's nationalism and neutralism in the Cold War were perceived as a threat to the US, working to fill the vacuum left by the British and French. To Nasser and Egypt this was seen as imperialism.

As a result of the Sinai Campaign, the international waterway that passes through the Straits of Tiran was opened to Israeli shipping and cargo with American assurances. Apart from this, there

¹¹ Shlaim, 2001: pp. 57-59; 62; Touval, 1982: pp.76-105

¹² Shlaim, 2001: pp.59; 62

¹³ Shlaim, 2001: pp. 57-59; 62

¹⁴ Gaddis, John Lewis: *We now know: Rethinking Cold War History*, 1997: p.172; Goldschmidt, Arthur: *Modern Egypt. The Formation of a Nation State*, 2004: p.124; Shlaim, 2001: p.169

¹⁵ Gaddis, 1997: p.171

¹⁶ Neff, 1995: p.100; Hahn, Peter L: *The United States, Great Britain & Egypt, 1945 – 1956, Strategy and Diplomacy in the Early Cold War*, 1991: p. 233

were no considerable permanent territorial changes.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the Suez War entailed a change in the balance of power between Israel and the Arab States in favour of Israel. The Israeli army won a clear military victory which raised the prestige and morale of the Israel Defence Force (IDF). The Fedayeen bases in Gaza were destroyed and the Egyptian army did not return to the Sinai. A United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) was established and deployed between the belligerent forces in the Sinai area.¹⁸ Nasser's attitude toward Israel hardened further, and the enemy was increasingly identified with the European powers. After the immediate crisis was contained, no major international initiatives were taken to solve the conflict in general. The situation in the Middle East remained one of relative calm until the mid-sixties, but below the surface the smouldering persisted.¹⁹

Six-Day War

In June 1967, the growing asymmetry of power between Israel and the Arab states was to manifest itself explicitly. Friction again increased along the Israeli borders. The situation was particularly strained on the border Israel shared with Syria, where the new, radical Ba'thist regime was strongly opposing Israel. Many Arabs accused the Egyptian president Nasser of cowardly hiding behind the UNEF in Sinai while the Israeli army was ravaging on the Jordanian and Syrian borders.²⁰ Nasser felt his credibility and position in the Arab World threatened by these accusations. Egypt had defence-pacts with Syria and Jordan that committed each party to act in the event of a hostile attack. Nasser was compelled to act although he seemingly neither wanted nor planned a war with Israel. What finally set off the Egyptian reaction, were erroneous Soviet reports of the mobilization of Israeli troops on the Syrian border, ordered to put an end to guerrilla raids from Syria.²¹ Nasser sent a large number of troops into Sinai, and proceeded to order the UNEF out. Although Israel had long declared that such action would be considered a *casus belli*, Nasser subsequently closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping and cargo. The opening of the straits was the one lasting and tangible gain made by Israel in the 1956 war.²²

The growing tension along the borders burst into full-blown war when Israel launched an air attack on Egypt on 5 June. Israel caught the Egyptians off-guard: the Egyptian air force was destroyed while still on the ground. Syria, Jordan and Iraq came to Egypt's assistance, attacking

¹⁷ Shlaim, 2001: p.183

¹⁸ Hahn, 1991: p.234-234

¹⁹ Shlaim, 2001: pp.181-184

²⁰ Goldschmidt, 2004: p.144; Shlaim, 2001: p.237

²¹ Quandt, William B: *Peace Process. American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967*, 1993: p.26; Shlaim, 2001: p.237

²² Quandt, 1993: p.29; Lundestad, Geir: *Øst-Vest-Nord-Sør. Hovedlinjer i internasjonal politikk etter 1945*, 2004: p.92

targets in Israel. Within few hours the Jordanian and Syrian air forces and the Iraqi airbase close to the Jordanian border were equally shattered by Israel. With no Arab air forces intact, Israel had won the war almost before it had started. At the end of the Six-Day War Israel had occupied the entire Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the old city of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. All the land intended for the Palestinians in 1947, and more, was now conquered by Israel.²³

On the sixth day of war, 10 June, the Soviet Union openly threatened to intervene with all means necessary if Israel did not stop its continuing belligerency.²⁴ In the face of this threat of superpower confrontation, Israel was persuaded by the US to make arrangements for a cease-fire. Later that same day all parties to the conflict had accepted a UN cease-fire resolution. Israel capitulated in the face of the Soviet threat, but capitulation did not equal defeat. Israel had already accomplished its war aims and more. Few days later the Israeli information minister Yisrael Galili, unilaterally renounced the armistice agreements from 1949, by stating that Israel could not return to the boundaries determined by these agreements.²⁵

The war led to a severing of the diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union.²⁶ France, once Israel's closest foreign friend, condemned the Israeli acquisition of territory and broke off its extensive weapons supply that had lasted for nineteen years. Washington became Israel's new provider of arms.²⁷ Six Arab states, including Egypt, broke off diplomatic relations with Washington, and were subsequently drawn closer to the Soviet Union.²⁸ Additionally, the 1967 war created another 200,000 Palestinian Arab refugees, and more than one million Arabs from this point on lived within Israeli borders.²⁹ The war was a major defeat for the Arabs. It came after years of aggressive Arab agitation, leading the Arab masses to believe that they could win an easy victory over Israel. The crushing defeat in the Six-Day War therefore held severe implications for Arab morale.³⁰

After nearly two decades of little international involvement in the area, numerous attempts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict were now initiated. The peace initiatives undertaken in the wake of the Six-Day war, occurred under different circumstances from the previous attempts to find a solution. Until the mid 1950s Western influence predominated throughout the Middle East. Britain

²³ See maps pp.130-131

²⁴ Breslauer, George W.: *Soviet Strategy in the Middle East*, 1990: p. 255; Neff, Donald: *Warriors for Jerusalem, The Six Days that Changed the Middle East*, 1988: p.279; Quandt, 1993: pp. 51-52; Rubinstein, Alvin Z: *Red Star on the Nile. The Soviet-Egyptian Influence Relationship since the June War*, 1977: p.12; Shlaim, 2001: pp.249-250

²⁵ Neff, 1988: p.282

²⁶ Goldschmidt, 2004: p.146; Neff, 1988: p.278

²⁷ Neff, 1988: pp.315-315, 353

²⁸ The massive Soviet aid promised to Egypt put Egypt in a position to refuse the kind of compromise settlement that Israel might have been prepared to accept. Neff, 1988: p.314; Quandt, 1993: p.51; Rubinstein, 1977: 29-32

²⁹ Neff, 1995: pp.100-103; Shlaim, 2001: pp.241-264

³⁰ Goldschmidt, 2004: p.149; Rabin, 1979: p.137; Shlaim, 2001: pp. 258-259

and France had controlled nearly all of the Arab nations from the end of World War I. At the end of the Suez War, the European powers were swept aside by the superpowers.³¹ From supporting the establishment of the State of Israel, the Soviet attitude had shifted. Israel had turned increasingly to the United States, who was searching for solid support for its policy of containment against the USSR.³² The Russians increasingly identified with the Arab struggle against Israel. Although the Cold War was in a period of détente, the Middle East was one of the areas where the superpowers did not hold back on vying for influence. In 1967 the Soviet Union was no longer the comparably weak adversary in the Middle East that Dwight Eisenhower faced in 1956. By 1967, the Soviet Union held considerable influence in Egypt, Syria and Iraq. As opposed to earlier, the Arab-Israeli conflict had become intertwined with the East-West conflict.³³

This balance of influence brought implications for how the crisis was handled in the UN Security Council. The two veto holding superpowers reflected the positions of their clients in the area, and thus a common ground was hard to find. There were serious divisions as to whether a resolution should contain a mere cease-fire, or if a cease-fire should be linked to a restoration of the June 4 borders. The Israelis would not accept a restoration of the pre-war borders. On the other hand, a cease-fire was not acceptable to Egypt because it would be tantamount to a complete surrender. However, Moscow finally had to drop the precondition of a return to the June 4 borders at the Security Council and a resolution for a mere cease-fire was adopted.

The subsequent process in the Security Council to agree on a resolution that could provide a formula for peace did not go any smoother than the one before. Moscow was determined to have a resolution passed that would condemn Israel and call for its immediate withdrawal from the captured territory. On the other side of the table, the majority of Americans felt that the withdrawal of Israeli troops should be connected with some sort of peace agreement. Unlike the American reaction after the Suez War, they were not willing to force Israel out of the conquered territory in return for little or nothing.³⁴ Neither did the US want the Soviet Union to receive credit for finding a solution in the search for a resolution. No progress was thus made in the Security Council. As a result, the Russians called for an emergency meeting in the UN General Assembly.³⁵ Many smaller member states of the UN were openly opposing Israel's occupation. The Russians hoped that they therefore might have a better chance of being heard in the General Assembly. The Assembly first met on June 17 1967. The negative pattern from the Security Council was repeated, and the assembly did not manage to agree

³¹ Neff 1988: p.25; Klantschnig, Gernot: "Oil, the Suez Canal, and Sterling Reserves: Economic Factors Determining British Decision-making During the 1967 Arab-Israeli Crisis" in *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, vol.14, no.3, 2003: p.132

³² Shlaim, 2001: p.189

³³ Lundestad, 2004: p.90; Neff 1988: p.280; Touval, 1982: p.135

³⁴ Quandt, 1993: p.54

³⁵ Rubinstein, 1977: pp.14-15

on a resolution setting out practical terms leading to peace. The deliberations in the General Assembly were concluded on September 18.

Although the war was over in the Middle East, the fighting continued. The sinking of an Israeli destroyer on October 21 and Israel's retaliatory shelling and destruction of Egyptian oil refineries, created an urgent need to defuse the continuing crisis. The Security Council was therefore brought back in session on October 24.³⁶ After weeks of difficult discussions, a British draft resolution was presented to the Council: On 22 November 1967 the Security Council Resolution 242 was unanimously adopted.³⁷

The United States played a leading role in getting the resolution accepted. Working hard behind the scenes, the USA assured the Arabs as well as the Israelis privately that Israel would not be allowed to retain its new conquests. Remembering how the United States forced Israel to return its conquests after the Suez War, the US promises were believable to the Arabs.³⁸ Israel's influence in the US had, however, changed since 1956. The American administration under Lyndon B Johnson had come to believe that Eisenhower's handling of the Suez Crisis was a mistake. The Johnson administration would not adopt a similar strategy of forcing its ally Israel to withdraw from conquered territories in return for little in the way of Arab concessions.³⁹ The US did not necessarily support Israel's indefinite hold on the occupied areas, but the Johnson administration was of the opinion that the territories should be traded against peace. However, the United States accepted the Israeli call for an indefinite wording. Resolution 242 was deliberately ambiguous in order to get the acceptance of all members of the Security Council.⁴⁰

The Framework for the Jarring Mission

Because the solution was a compromise, the resolution was distinguished through its lack of definition and clarity. It requested the "termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force".⁴¹ It affirmed the necessity for guaranteeing freedom of navigation and for achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem,

³⁶ Neff, 1988: p.318; Rubinstein, 1977: 38

³⁷ UN SC Resolution 242, 22 November 1967. See Appendix II, p.131.

³⁸ Neff, 1988: p. 340-343; Neff, 1995: p.101

³⁹ Quandt, 1993: pp.50, 54-55

⁴⁰ Quandt, 1993: pp.50, 54-55

⁴¹ UN SC Resolution 242, 22 November 1967. See Appendix II, p.131.

thereby only referring to the Palestinians indirectly.⁴² The resolution also called for the “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict”.⁴³ The omission of the definite article *the*, or the pronoun *all* in connection with territories, gave the sentence above sufficient ambiguity to be acceptable to all members of the Security Council. At the same time it allowed for different interpretations of the resolution. The Security Council failed to demand Israeli withdrawal from all territories, and to require the Arabs to make “full peace” with Israel.⁴⁴ “The inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war” was emphasized in the preamble, but in UN documents the preamble has no binding effect.⁴⁵ Thus, the resolution gave the appearance of great accomplishment, but it would have no substance without the complete cooperation from all parties to the conflict. The ambiguous resolution won the support of the United States, the Soviet Union, Jordan and Egypt, but not of Syria. Israel did not accept the resolution publicly until August 1970; however it did express its acceptance off the record in February 1968.⁴⁶

Resolution 242 furthermore “Requests the Secretary General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in this resolution”.⁴⁷ The ambiguous provisions and principles of the resolution thus provided the framework within which the Special Representative was to work. This means that his initial challenge would be to bridge the gap between different interpretations.

In the same manner as the resolution as a whole, the Security Council did not reach agreement on the tasks and responsibilities of the UN envoy to the Middle East easily. Jarring’s mandate was made fuzzy in order to get all parties to accept it. Israel wanted the UN envoy to have a non-substantive mandate, and the Arab states wanted the intermediary to have a specific substantive mandate.⁴⁸ In keeping with their ally’s wishes, the Americans stressed the need for an independent,

⁴² The question was thoroughly studied by Jarring and his crew, and the issue was discussed with the adversaries throughout the mission. The refugee question never received principal attention in the Jarring mission, pushed in the background by the procedural discussions concerning the contradictory views on whether negotiations should precede or follow withdrawal. The possible solution of the problem was, and is, disputed, and it turned out to be only a theoretical exercise on part of the Jarring mission. Shlaim, 2001: 260-261

⁴³ Security Council Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967

⁴⁴ Neff, 1995: pp.100-101; Quandt, 1993: p.56

⁴⁵ Neff, 1988: p.344; Quandt, 1993: p.56; Shlaim, 2001: p.260; Rabin, 1979: p.136

⁴⁶ Shlaim, 2001: p.260

⁴⁷ Security Council Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967

⁴⁸ NA, box 2065, 8 June 1970: cable from the Secretary to London

imaginative mediator, like Bunche, and the Soviets emphasized the necessity for firm guidelines which would give Jarring little room for personal initiative or flexibility.⁴⁹

The title *Special Representative*, given to the delegate, reflects the ambiguity of the resolution as a whole. When interpreting the mandate for Jarring in a personal letter, the UN Secretary General U Thant wrote that the Security Council hoped to “achieve maximum flexibility in the scope and function of the Secretary General’s representative” by giving the UN envoy with this title.⁵⁰ By entitling the delegate a Special Representative, the two techniques of the *mediator* and the *good offices*, was allowed to the UN envoy. The meanings of both methods were well-established in general international law and in United Nations practice. According to Oppenheim’s *International Law* the theoretical distinction between the two terms *mediator* and *good offices*, is that a *mediator* has an inherent right to submit proposals and suggestions of his own during the direct conduct of negotiations, while *good offices* can be regarded the action of bringing negotiations into existence.⁵¹ However, this interpretation was not presented to the parties to the conflict. The ambiguous title thus reduced the UN envoy’s room to manoeuvre, and in reality it gave in to the demands of Israel and the US by avoiding to give him a clear mandate. “The functions which the Special Representative can usefully perform and the measures which he may employ will depend upon the willingness of the parties themselves to find such functions and measures acceptable or at least not to raise objections to them”.⁵² The Special Representative was thus completely dependent on the cooperation and willingness of the parties to make progress.

It is difficult to discern what the UN Security Council believed it could accomplish with such a vague resolution. It is not likely that the members of the Council believed that the resolution would in itself lead to a settlement of the conflict. However, it was difficult for the international organization not to make an initiative to promote peace, considering that was a *raison d’être*.⁵³ As the situation was in the Security Council with both superpowers holding veto, it would not have been possible to pass a resolution biased to one side or the other, thus it must have seemed preferable to pass an ambiguous resolution than not to pass one at all.

⁴⁹ NA, box 2067, 30 July 1970: cable from Beam, Moscow to the Secretary

⁵⁰ UN Archives and Record Management Section (UNA), S-0353-5-1: Letter to Jarring from U Thant [Secretary-General] 16 December 1967.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ The UN Charter states that one purpose of the UN is “to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace” Charter of the United Nations, Chapter 1, Article 1.

On 23 November 1967 the Secretary General U Thant informed the Security Council that Ambassador Gunnar V. Jarring of Sweden had been invited and had accepted the appointment as Special Representative to the Middle East.⁵⁴ The governments of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt were informed of the appointment of Jarring and given the following biographical data: “Prior to his present post, Ambassador Jarring served at various times as Swedish Minister to India, to Ceylon, to Iran, to Iraq and to Pakistan. He was director of the Political Division of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1953 to 1956 and was Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations from 1956 to 1958, during which time he served on the Security Council from 1957 to 1958. After leaving the United Nations, Ambassador Jarring served for a period as Swedish Ambassador to the United States of America”.⁵⁵ At the time of the appointment, he was Swedish Ambassador to the Soviet Union. Following his new assignment, Gunnar Jarring soon travelled to Cyprus, where he established the headquarters for the Jarring mission. He was accompanied by a small delegation consisting of a political advisor, Ian Berendsen from New Zealand and a military advisor, Lieutenant-Colonel Lauri Coho from Finland, both from the UN Secretariat.⁵⁶ His personal secretary Göran Berg of the Swedish Foreign Service joined the small group in Nicosia.⁵⁷

Ambitions and Constraints

The Israelis and the Arabs looked at Jarring’s arrival from different angles. The ultimate goal for the Jarring mission was to engage the parties in some sort of negotiations in order to reach an agreement. However, the differing aspirations of the adversaries instead produced a continuous discussion over formalities.⁵⁸ All parties wanted different things from Jarring, but no government wanted mediation.⁵⁹

Israel held the opinion that the provisions of the Security Council Resolution 242 were a list of key issues in the conflict, and that such matters would have to be discussed face-to-face before any one of the provisions could be implemented. Israel thus meant that Jarring’s job was to make sure such negotiations take place.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Reich, 1972: p.13

⁵⁵ UNA, S-0279-14-3: UN press release 23 November 1967; Ibid.

⁵⁶ UNA, S-0668-1-10: UN press release 8 December 1967

⁵⁷ The functions of Göran Berg during his time with the Jarring mission were somewhat unclear. Travelling with the mission, Berg kept in contact with the Swedish Foreign Ministry or the Swedish embassy in Moscow at Jarring’s request. (Jarring was Ambassador to Moscow through the whole time he was engaged in the Jarring mission.) Jarring trusted Berg and also discussed his ideas with him, however, Berg was never involved in the process per se, but was more of a personal assistant to Jarring. Interview with Göran Berg, 7 December 2006.

⁵⁸ NA box 1804, 24 January 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary

⁵⁹ Kriesberg, Louis: *International Conflict resolution. The U.S.-USSR and Middle East Cases*, 1992: p.139

⁶⁰ Breslauer, 1990: p.28; UNOrHist: Krasno, 1990: p.11; Reich, 1972: p.14; Touval, 1982: p.143; *UN Yearbook*, 1968: p.266

Behind this interpretation of Resolution 242 and Jarring's mandate lay tactical reasoning. Convinced that time was on its side, Israel's tactics toward the Jarring mission seems to have been to delay the negotiation of a peace agreement, in which it expected to have to make concessions, by feeding Jarring proposals and documents to which he was to obtain Arab reactions.⁶¹ Following the Six-Day War, Israel started an ambitious settlement programme to strengthen its control over the disputed areas.⁶² By December 1968, Israeli leaders were speaking openly of holding on to 15 percent of the West Bank. Israeli plans described by Eshkol and Eban were a far cry from the minor border rectifications which the US had in mind, and far from the sort of settlement the Americans had told King Hussein they envisaged for Jordan on the West Bank when the US worked behind the scenes to get Resolution 242 adopted. There were clear indications that "Israel [was] moving toward a policy of acquisition which neither politics nor equity can sustain. [Israel insisted] on keeping troops at Sharm el-Sheikh with [a] land corridor through Sinai".⁶³ In addition there were signs that "Israel also want[ed] to keep Gaza."⁶⁴

Apart from the territorial aspirations, the Israeli tactics of delaying progress may have been a result of a lack of domestic unity. Although the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, on 30 October 1967 declared publicly its decision to "maintain the situation fixed by the cease-fire agreements and reinforce its position by taking into account its security and development needs", Israel was not united on the issue of the future of the newly occupied areas.⁶⁵ The Israeli coalition government under Prime Minister Levi Eshkol included a wide range of parties and ideological points of view.⁶⁶ The hard-line faction and the more conciliatory group in the Israeli government disagreed, amongst other questions, on whether or not the resolution required Israel to return to pre-June 1967 borders as part of a negotiated settlement. The Israeli government ran the risk of falling apart the moment it decided to negotiate seriously, because a move towards peace would cause its right-wing ministers to resign.⁶⁷ This complicated the decision-making process. Keeping the Jarring mission alive by tactical means would thus both fill a diplomatic vacuum, and appear to meet international and domestic demands, buying time for Israel's territorial aspirations and at the same time preventing the

⁶¹ Shlaim, 2001: p.261

⁶² Shlaim, 2001: pp.250-264

⁶³ NA, box 1805, 13 December 1968: cable from Wiggins, USUN to the Secretary

⁶⁴ NA, box 1805, 13 December 1968: cable from Wiggins, USUN to the Secretary

⁶⁵ Quandt, 1993: p.3; Shlaim, 2001: pp.250-259

⁶⁶ In 1965 The Israeli Labour Party, Mapai (moderate), joined with Ahdut Ha'avodah (hawkish) to form a Labor Alignment. The Alignment was a joint list of two parties which were not united. In 1968 the two parties merged with Rafi (hawkish): a group of Ben-Gurion supporters who had left Mapai a few years earlier, to form the Israeli Labor Party. In 1969 the new party formed an electoral coalition with Mapam (dowish), and this union became the second Labor Alignment which continued to dominate the government. Shlaim, 2001: pp.200; 222; 251; 262; 286

⁶⁷ NA box 1811, 10 July 1968, cable from Rusk to USUN; NA box 1814, 29 October 1968, cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv to the Secretary; Shlaim, 2001: pp.238; 251

conflict from returning to the Security Council, where Israel could be blamed for the failure of the mission.⁶⁸

Israel was in a much stronger position than before the war. A potential peace agreement would therefore necessarily entail a real change in relations with the Arabs, meaning recognition of Israel by the Arab states. Such recognition could come about through direct negotiations.⁶⁹ In order to obtain direct negotiations, the Israelis wanted to avoid negotiations through the UN. The UN pullout from the Sinai and Sharm el-Sheik prior to the Six-Day War further damaged the reputation of the organisation in Israel. In addition, the Israelis doubted the capacity of the UN to be impartial and its ability to mediate. The Israeli defence minister Moshe Dayan stated that “I can certainly not recall that any problem was ever settled by diplomacy or through the United Nations.”⁷⁰

Unlike the Israelis, it seems like Jordan and Egypt initially preferred to work through the UN and had high expectations to the Jarring mission. Egypt and Jordan felt that their only major bargaining card was recognition of Israel’s right to exist. They did not intend to play this card unless they were assured that a settlement with Israel would maintain their interests. The main Arab preoccupation was to remove the Israeli forces from the territories lost in the June War.⁷¹ Egypt and Jordan insisted that Resolution 242 was self implementing and that there could be no discussion with Israel on the provisions of the resolution until the Israeli forces had been withdrawn to the pre-June 1967 lines.⁷² Their vision for the Jarring mission was not that Jarring would serve as a mediator in negotiations with Israel, but that his task was to oversee the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.

For the Arab states, the Six-Day War marked their third military defeat. The destruction of the Jordanian and Egyptian forces left them vulnerable to the Israeli army, and in addition, their economies were left in a poor condition. The capture of the West Bank, the closure of the Suez Canal and the loss of income from the oil fields in the Sinai, now under Israeli control, cost Egypt and Jordan a large percentage of their gross national incomes.⁷³ The bleak situation necessitated a change in policies. The Arabs were now in need of a political rather than a military solution to reach their goal.⁷⁴ At the first meeting of Arab leaders after the war, the Khartoum conference between 28 August and 2 September, both Nasser and King Hussein took a moderate stand and displayed a

⁶⁸ Shlaim, 2001: p.261

⁶⁹ NA box 1805, 28 February 1968, cable from Rusk to Tel Aviv

⁷⁰ NA box 1804, 19 January 1968: cable from Bergus, Cairo to the Secretary; Neff, 1988: p.255; Shlaim, 2001: p.261

⁷¹ Goldschmidt, 2004: p.151; Mutawi, Samir A: *Jordan in the 1967 War*, 1987: pp.173-174; Sayigh, Yezid and Shlaim, Avi: *The Cold War and the Middle East*, 1996: p.35

⁷² Breslauer, 1990: p.28 ; UNOrHist: Krasno, 1990: p.11; Reich, 1972: p.14; Touval, 1982: p.143; *UN yearbook*, 1968: p.266

⁷³ Sayigh and Shlaim, 1996: pp.35, 104

⁷⁴ Goldschmidt, 2004: p.150; Mutawi, 1987: pp.173-174; Shlaim, 2001: p.261

willingness to go further than before in a settlement with Israel.⁷⁵ At Khartoum, oil-rich Arab countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait agreed to subsidize the economies of both Egypt and Jordan to compensate for the losses in income until “the effects of the aggression are eliminated”. Before the war, Nasser had directed his radical policies towards these pro-western, but wealthy countries, the same states he had become dependant on.⁷⁶ This implied a change in his posture in the Arab world. Jordan had up until this point mainly received aid from Western countries, and had been fairly content with the armistice lines from 1949. King Hussein had even maintained unofficial contact with Israel.⁷⁷ Now becoming dependant on Arab rather than Western aid also implied a change for the regional considerations of King Hussein. The concern for Arab unity thus tied up Jordan’s ability to act independently.

Nasser’s new, more moderate stand was, however, not apparent to the Israelis. Discussing the future Arab policy toward Israel at Khartoum, the diverging views of the Arab world became apparent. Syria refused to participate in the discussions, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) left the conference before its conclusion and the rest of the attending Arab states disagreed on which path to follow.⁷⁸ The Khartoum conference resulted in the adoption of a declaration, reflecting the differences of opinion amongst the Arabs. The declaration is known as the three noes of Khartoum: no recognition, no negotiation and no peace with Israel.⁷⁹ Rightly, these noes did not show any sign of reconciliation, yet Arab spokesmen interpreted the declarations to mean “no formal peace *treaty*, not a rejection of a state of peace; no *direct* negotiations, but not a refusal to talk to third parties; and no *de jure* recognition of Israel, but acceptance of its existence as a state.”⁸⁰ The three noes appeared to be uncompromising, but were a means of assuring the Palestinian people that their cause had not been lost. The moderate stance of Nasser must be considered a major step towards peace. However, the three noes proved to be a stumbling block obstructing an Arab-Israeli settlement. The noes were seen as an illustration of Arab intransigence, which could be used as a strong argument on part of outside powers not to place strong pressure on Israel to withdraw from Arab land.⁸¹

Moreover, despite his new inter-Arab considerations, Nasser fought to retain his former position as the leader of radical Arab nationalist. Egypt and Jordan met harsh criticism from Syria, Iraq, Algeria and the PLO for accepting Resolution 242 in the first place. Further concessions could

⁷⁵ Mutawi, 1987: pp.173-175; Shlaim, 2001: p.258

⁷⁶ Goldschmidt: 2004, p.150; Mutawi, 1987: pp.173-177; Rubinstein, 1977: p.41; Sayigh and Shlaim, 1996: pp.35, 104

⁷⁷ Quandt, 1993: p.2

⁷⁸ Golan, Galia, *Soviet Policies in the Middle East from World War two to Gorbachev*, 1990: p.70

⁷⁹ Goldschmidt, 2004: p.149; Rabin, 1979: p.137; Shlaim, 2001: pp. 258-259

⁸⁰ Shlaim, 2001: p.258

⁸¹ Mutawi, 1987: p.177

expose them to sharper attacks and domestic unrest.⁸² Troubles at home added to Nasser's reluctance to appear to be yielding in his opposition against Israel. The June "setback" shook Egyptian students and workers from their former passivity, and for the first time since 1954, they demonstrated against the regime, demanding liberalization of the Egyptian political system.⁸³ For Egypt and Jordan, the talks with Jarring could thus be face-saving. Diplomatic activity in itself would give Arab moderates, and leaders who recognized the limitations of the Arab armies an alibi for avoiding a military option. It would also buy Nasser time to recuperate following the 1967 defeat.

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The nearly twenty years of conflict preceding the Jarring mission, revealed a growing asymmetry of power between Israel on the one side and its Arab neighbours on the other. This moral, economic and military asymmetry was further enhanced in favour of Israel as a result of the Six-Day War. Compared with the regional situation surrounding the first UN effort in 1949, the conditions for peace talks were significantly altered in 1967. Two wars had occurred in the meantime, the refugee problem was greatly augmented and Israel's position was much strengthened in the area and internationally. The relation of power between the two sides to the conflict affected the interests of the parties. Israel was strong enough not to need to budge from the post-war status quo.

The dominating Western influence in the Middle East until the mid 1950s had made possible a more pragmatic approach by the Americans, visible for example in the pressure applied by the US on Egypt *and* Israel in the 1949 armistice negotiations, and on its two close allies, Britain and Israel, during the Suez Crisis. At the time of the Jarring mission, however, the Arab-Israeli conflict had become intertwined with the East-West conflict. The US and the Soviet Union had almost completely taken over the strong former influence of France and Britain in the area. Containment of the opposing superpower had become a weighty factor when Middle East policy was formulated in Washington and Moscow. This diminished the freedom of action that Western powers had previously enjoyed in the area.

The superpower rivalry affected the mandate under which Gunnar Jarring was to function. An ambiguous resolution and a vague mandate were the only guidelines the Jarring mission brought with it to Middle East peace diplomacy. Jordan, Egypt and Israel accepted Jarring's involvement in the conflict. However, as a result of the vague mandate, they all expected different things from him

⁸² Touval, 1982: pp.143-144

⁸³ Goldschmidt, 2004, p.150; Mutawi, 1987: pp.173-177; Rubinstein, 1977: pp.49-54

according to what suited their interests. Jarring's challenge from the outset was therefore to bridge the gap between interpretations of Resolution 242.

A Solitary Traveller

On 9 December 1967, Gunnar Jarring embarked on his mission in the Middle East. The next 16 months Jarring spent travelling between meetings with the representatives of Jordan, Egypt and Israel in the capitals of the Middle East, between various offices in New York and certain European cities. This chapter gives an account of the course of the first phase of the Jarring mission. It aims to study Jarring's role during this period, and to explore the factors affecting the mission, domestically, regionally and internationally.

Jarring's Role

As a mediator, Gunnar Jarring was criticised for being too passive. External actors, like the US and the Soviet Union, condescendingly nicknamed him "the mailbox" because of Jarring's usual compliance with the wishes of the adversaries, which they felt resulted in a rather fruitless exchange of messages through the Special Representative.¹ To a large degree Jarring did shuttle conscientiously back and forth between the adversaries with their messages to one another. However, this chapter argues that Jarring's role was somewhat greater than merely that of a mailbox, which points toward the more active role he assumed during the second phase of the mission.² As we shall see, Jarring put forward at least a few independent analyses and proposals to the participants in the talks during the first phase. However, these proposals never exceeded matters of procedure and merely extended to questions such as when, where and how to meet for negotiations.

Jarring's technique of intervention was marked by a cautious avoidance of failure. The adversaries only granted the Jarring mission a reluctant and confined acceptance. This caused concern that the acceptance of the mission could easily be withdrawn if anyone were offended by the actions of the Special Representative.³ Jarring attached a lot of importance to keeping the confidence of the parties, and guarded the information they passed through him carefully. To keep the mission alive and to keep his path clean, Jarring also secured the prior consent of the adversaries before further moves were made. His strategy was apparently to make progress little by little by building

¹ NA, box 1814, 9 November 1968: cable from Dept St to Tel Aviv; NA, box 1815, 21 November 1968: cable from the Secretary to Tel Aviv. Similar terms or names have also been used on Jarring, like "mailman" or "messenger service". Rafael, 1981: pp.195; 254

² See Chapter 5

³ Touval, 1982: p.160-161

proposals and analyses on any nuance available in the attitudes the adversaries had conveyed to him. The hope must have been that it would be difficult for the parties to the conflict to reject any proposal by Jarring that was based on their own prior statements. Such an approach might allow Jarring a deeper degree of involvement later on. The cautious approach may have been his personal choice, seeing that Jarring considered trust to be the only foundations upon which to build a settlement.⁴ However, one may also argue that Jarring did not have any other options considering his weak mandate.

External Involvement

As mentioned, a representative of the UN possesses no leverage or physical resources to force an agreement on the parties to the conflict. Progress towards a settlement would either have to depend on the aspirations of the adversaries to work towards peace, or on Jarring receiving levers of power through a greater degree of backing. Internationally, the superpowers held the potential power to influence the situation. Israel, the victor of the war, was a client state of the US, while Egypt was a Soviet foothold in the region. Jordan had been a western ally in the area, and the US still funded the country, but Jordan's foreign policy had tilted in favour of Egypt, placing the country in a middle position. Moscow, however, never held influence in Amman.⁵

The Russians had limited resources to back Jarring actively without running the risk of superpower confrontation. They held no influence with Israel, and the Arabs could not be pushed to make considerable concessions, seeing that they had little left to yield. Only in a multilateral framework, between the two superpowers, additional powers, or at the United Nations, could the Soviet Union therefore safely play a role in a peace settlement in the Middle East.⁶

The initial American attitude towards the Jarring mission was one of wait and see. The mission thus acted largely without active involvement of any external powers during its first phase. Gunnar Jarring was a solitary traveller. It is relevant to enquire why he was left to act on his own, and what effect the US hands-off attitude had on Jarring's degree of influence in the first phase. How was the interaction between Jarring's cautious negotiating technique and the reserved American attitude towards his efforts? Did Jarring prefer to act alone, or was it a result of the reserved attitudes of the superpowers?

At the outset a part of Jarring's shielded strategy was designed to avoid interaction with the external powers.⁷ It was commented that Jarring held "his cards so close to his chest" that it was

⁴ Interview with Göran Berg, 7 December, 2006

⁵ Sayigh and Shlaim, 1996: p.168

⁶ Breslauer, 1990: p.23-27; Golan, 1990: p.70

⁷ Interview with Göran Berg, 7 December, 2006

hard to follow the development of the mission for foreign ministries of outside powers.⁸ Association with powerful countries could expose Jarring to criticism from the participants to the talks, and lead to their questioning of his intentions and impartiality. Contact with outsiders might in addition cause destructive leaks to the press which could threaten the mission. Jarring's low degree of collaboration with external powers may thus have been the choice of the mission.

American Policy Towards the Jarring Mission

Jarring's secretive approach may also have originated from, or at least been affected by, the attitudes of the superpowers. The chance for diplomatic progress seemed to depend on others. In the asymmetric situation between Israel on one side and Jordan and Egypt on the other, the best prospects for peace would be if the stronger party was influenced to make concessions. The US was the only power possessing real potential to influence Israel. This influence depended on its willingness and ability to bestow rewards and reproaches. At the outset of the post war diplomacy, the Johnson administration staked out a public position somewhere between the views of Israel on the one side, and Jordan and Egypt on the other. US policymakers stated that an indefinite Israeli occupation of the disputed areas was not considered acceptable. The territories should be exchanged for "full peace" through a genuine peace agreement.⁹ These promises combined with the memories of President Eisenhower's impact after the Suez War, led many Arabs to expect that Washington would press Israel for concessions.¹⁰

Although pursuing a political settlement in theory, not much was done by the US to transform it into practice. During most of 1968, the Johnson administration kept a low profile in the Arab-Israeli diplomacy.¹¹ Israel's influence in Washington had changed since 1956. Lyndon B Johnson was, until then, the most pro-Israeli American president ever.¹² Johnson was strongly influenced by the pro-Israeli tone of the Congress and of American public opinion. Johnson had spent most of his political life in Congress, and was "brought up" in its traditions, where Israel traditionally enjoyed strong support.¹³ The Congress and Pentagon did not want another open-ended unilateral commitment of American troops, considering the vast US involvement in Vietnam at the time.¹⁴ President Johnson also meant that the United States should not assume the role of active peacemaker at this point in time. Confronted with the almost contradictory position of the

⁸ NA box 1810, 20 May 1968: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv to the Secretary

⁹ Quandt, 1993: pp. 4-5

¹⁰ Neff, 1988: p. 340-343; Neff, 1995: p.101

¹¹ Quandt, 1993: pp.54-61

¹² Christison, Kathleen: "Bound by a Frame of Reference, Part II: U.S. Policy and the Palestinians, 1948-88" in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol.27, No.3 1998: p.23; Neff, 1995: p.152

¹³ The influence of Congress on foreign policies stems mainly from its control over the budget. Quandt, 1993: p.8

¹⁴ Klantschnig, 2003: p.135; Quandt, 1993: pp.54; 61

adversaries, pessimistic over the prognosis because of the minimal influence of the US in the Arab capitals, and because he could not sustain such an effort at a time when the United States was bogged down in Vietnam, Johnson was reluctant to get deeply involved in the Arab-Israeli diplomacy.¹⁵ In addition, the Egyptian President Nasser's hostility and accusations of US – Israeli collaboration during the Six-Day War, probably made it easier for the president to adopt a policy of support for Israel.¹⁶

The initial US strategy was to wait out the Arabs until they were prepared to negotiate with the Israelis over the occupied areas in light of the new framework provided by Resolution 242.¹⁷ The limited contact between Jarring and the Johnson administration may have diminished Jarring's room for manoeuvre considerably.

This picture of Jarring's dependence on the superpowers to create movement does not fit with the image portraying Jarring's strategy. Jarring's avoidance of contact with outside powers may have been a result of his fear of losing the confidence and respect of the adversaries. This implies that this approach was his individual choice.¹⁸ Yet the lack of contact with the outside powers may also have been influenced by the lack of active support from the one superpower with real influence over the situation. Contact with outside powers could deprive the mission of more qualities than it would gain. To what degree did these two factors interact in the first phase? Was Jarring left by the US to deal with the conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbours on his own, or did he to a large degree choose this path? Did the Jarring mission function as a welcome means for the Johnson administration to avoid getting involved in the conflict at this difficult time for US foreign policy?

Small Advances

The first five months of his mission Jarring conducted a shuttle diplomacy, travelling between the mission's headquarters on Cyprus and the capitals of Jordan, Egypt and Israel, and to a lesser extent Lebanon, to meet with the Foreign Ministers of the countries mentioned above. Jarring's style was not very spectacular: He travelled with his small group in a modest ten-seat plane. The only security arrangement was one bodyguard.¹⁹

Apart from providing a basis for a record of the attitudes of the adversaries, these first visits to the capitals of the Middle East were dedicated to trying to find ways to defuse the situation and soften the minds of the foes. The fundamental problem facing the Jarring mission was the conflicting

¹⁵ Quandt, 1993: pp.54-56

¹⁶ Quandt, 1993: pp.54-61

¹⁷ See Chapter 2: pp.23-25

¹⁸ The sources are not clear on this matter.

¹⁹ Eban, 1977: p.454; Rafael, 1981: p.195

positions held by the adversaries on the implementation of Resolution 242: Israel held that a settlement could only be reached through direct negotiations between the parties culminating in a peace treaty and that there could be no withdrawal of their forces prior to such a settlement. Jordan and Egypt insisted that there could be no discussion between the parties until the Israeli forces had been withdrawn to the positions occupied by them prior to 5 June 1967.²⁰ This fundamental divergence was difficult to iron out.

Many parallel strategies were used. One was to try to find solutions to less complex problems. An incremental or gradual approach is a common method in negotiations, in which only minor issues are put on the negotiating table. Once some agreement has been made on these smaller issues, the parties may move on to more difficult issues.²¹ The Jarring mission used this approach with the hope that any small move would help to relieve this atmosphere of contradiction surrounding the Jarring mission and to build up confidence around it. The prospects of making progress on secondary problems resulting from the Six-Day War seemed far better than the prospect of advancement on the fundamental problems dividing the Arabs and Israelis. Jarring therefore immediately introduced to the adversaries the idea of dealing with secondary issues to the conflict as a first step.²²

One question under discussion early on was the exchange of prisoners-of-war (POW) between Israel and Egypt. This question was paid a lot of attention in Jarring's first talks with the parties to the conflict. Israel held 5.500 Egyptian prisoners-of-war, while Egypt held 19 Israeli military personnel and five Israelis imprisoned in Egypt since the Suez Crisis in 1956. After a few weeks of secret communication through Jarring, Cairo and Jerusalem agreed to carry out the exchange of the Israeli personnel held by Egypt in return for 500 of the Egyptians imprisoned in Israel.²³ There was no signed agreement, but the prisoner exchange began across the Suez Canal cease-fire line at Quantara on 12 January 1968. The prisoners of war were returned home after the final efforts made by the International Committee of the Red Cross.²⁴

The relatively collaborative attitude of both Israel and Egypt on this issue seemed to indicate that both were willing to encourage Jarring. They apparently also wanted to keep that channel of communication open. Nevertheless, it was not a breakthrough in the impasse over implementation of

²⁰ UN Document S/10070, 4 January 1971 (<http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf>, 13. September 2006)

²¹ Waage, 2004: p.7

²² Interview with Göran Berg, 7 December 2006; NA, box 1804, 31. December 1967, cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv to SecSt; UNOrHist: Krasno, 1990: pp.10 – 11; Reich, 1972: p.13; Touval, 1982: p.142; *UN Yearbook*, 1968: p.265

²³ NA, box 1804, 5. January 1968: intelligence note from Thomas L. Hughes, INR to the Secretary; Rafael, 1981: p.194; http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/pows.html (16 October 2006)

²⁴ Rafael, 1981: p.194; Thant, U: *View from the UN*, 1978: p.296

Resolution 242. The limited movement did not seem to have affected the subsequent process considerably. Moreover, other matters were discussed with less success.

The Six-Day War had left the Suez Canal closed for all passage. On 6 June, Nasser blocked the Canal from shipping and cargo.²⁵ A number of foreign vessels were trapped in the Bitter Lake area of the Suez Canal as a result of the closure. Clearance and reopening of the Canal was not only in the interest of the countries in the region, but also of Great Britain and a number of other states whose economies were affected by the closure of the canal.²⁶ However, it soon became clear that as long as Israeli forces were deployed along the east bank of the canal, a re-opening was not acceptable to Egypt. Through discussions under Jarring's auspices, Egypt and Israel agreed to only clear one end of the canal in order to release trapped ships.²⁷ However, Egypt would only accept the clearance of the northern end of the canal at Port Said, while Israel would only allow the ships to sail through the southern exit at Port Suez.²⁸ Perhaps trying to force the issue and to assert Egyptian sovereignty over the canal, the Egyptians sent a small boat to the northern passage in late January to get an overview of the situation. Jarring had approved the action by the Egyptians beforehand, stating his belief that the Israelis would not interfere.²⁹ However, noticing the Egyptian vessel, the Israeli forces on the East Bank started firing at the boat, producing a total impasse on the question. The episode demonstrated the fact that there was no real progress on either side. Neither Israel nor Egypt was yielding an inch to move closer to a settlement of this secondary issue.³⁰ After this episode, Jarring was no longer a part of the discussions regarding the release of ships trapped in the Suez Canal.³¹ This indicated that Jarring did not want to get involved in a highly controversial issue, probably worried that this conflict would affect his credibility or his standing as neutral in the conflict. Therefore, he pulled out.

It would take eight years before the trapped ships could leave the canal. In the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, Egypt and Israel signed a military disengagement agreement that led to a

²⁵ Nasser blocked the Suez Canal and imposed an oil embargo at least partly as an attempt to blackmail Western states into distancing themselves from Israel. However, the closure had no economic impact on the US, Nasser's primary target. Some British officials even argued that the US wanted the canal kept closed, as it harmed Egyptian and Soviet interests. To Britain, the closure of the Suez Canal became the most problematic consequence of the 1967 War. Before the closure, 25-30 per cent of British oil supplies were transported through the canal. It was the cheapest way to transport British oil supplies from the Middle East. Following the outbreak of the war, Britain had to use more and larger tankers to ship its supplies around the Cape. However, by mid-1969 the effects of the continued Suez closure had become negligible. Klantschnig, 2003: p.141-143

²⁶ Klantschnig, 2003: p.132; Touval, 1982: p. 143

²⁷ NA, box 1804, 5 January 1968: intelligence note from Thomas L. Hughes, INR to the Secretary

²⁸ UNOrHist: Krasno, 1990: p.12; Rafael, 1981: p.194; Thant, 1978: p.296

²⁹ NA box 1804, 19 January 1968: cable from Bergus, Cairo to the Secretary

³⁰ NA box 1805, 2 February 1968: memorandum of conversation between Hijazi, Editor of *The Arab World* and McAndrew, Beirut; Rafael, 1981: p.195

³¹ The effort to release ships in the Suez Canal was from then under the supervision of Norwegian General Odd Bull, the head of UNTSO – a UN Truce Supervision Organization corps, observing the cease-fire in the Suez Canal area and the Golan Heights following the Six-Day War. NA box 1804, 4 January 1968: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv to Sec St.

partial Israeli withdrawal from Sinai. The canal was as a result cleared of mines and war wreckage when both banks of the canal were once again under Egyptian control, and with the assistance of the US navy, the canal was reopened in 1975.³²

The attempts at making progress on less complex issues thus created more quandary than benefits. The atmosphere surrounding the Jarring mission was strained rather than eased as a result of the efforts with the secondary issues. It seemed like a good idea in theory, but did not produce favourable results in reality.

A Formula for Acceptance

Egypt and Jordan had given their approval of the Security Council Resolution 242 in November 1967. Israel had not yet accepted the resolution formally. A fruitful discussion on implementation was difficult before a clear acceptance was obtained, because any kind of agreement could easily be annulled by the Israelis since they were not committed to negotiations by acceptance. In Cairo and Amman it would be hard to justify further concessions without an explicit Israeli acceptance of the resolution. Israel's stonewalling increased the psychological and practical obstacles for Egypt and Jordan to move any further. Considering their difficult situation, additional concessions would more or less equal complete surrender as long as Israel made no concessions, not even accepting Resolution 242.³³

In late January 1968 Jarring tried to work around the conflicting positions of the adversaries by presenting to all three countries a document outlining what he saw as a compromise formula. In the document Jarring asked the parties to give their written acceptance of Resolution 242 "as a basis for settlement".³⁴ The aim was to bridge Jordan and Egypt's demands for unconditional implementation of the resolution, on the one hand, and the Israeli demand for direct negotiations on the other, by both parties stating in writing that the resolution would be the basis for settlement. The wording of Jarring's formula for acceptance was undefined, in the sense that it did not explicitly express what 'settlement' entailed, nor did it explain how Resolution 242 would lead to settlement. Jarring most likely hoped that the wording of the formula was sufficiently ambiguous to bypass the difficulties connected to Resolution 242 and allow for Israel, Jordan and Egypt to interpret his formula according to their own reading of the resolution. This can be said to be a way to postpone

³² Quandt, 1993: pp.238- 246; Rafael, 1981: p.195; Sayigh & Shlaim, 2003: pp.40; 178-181; Shlaim, 2001: p.322

³³ Touval, 1982: p.138

³⁴ NA box 1804, 24 January 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary; UN Document S/10070, 4 January 1971 (<http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf>, 13. September 2006); NA box 1804, 24 January 1968: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv to the Secretary; Waldheim, 1973: pp.183-184; Touval, 1982: p. 147

the difficult issues of the conflict, however, Jarring hoped a joint acceptance of the resolution could open the way for some kind of negotiations on more substantial issues.³⁵

Jordan and Egypt accepted implementation of the resolution in accordance with Jarring's proposed formula. This expression of cooperation was in accordance with the former Arab acceptance of the resolution. Until this point Egypt and Jordan had demanded an unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli forces. But when asked by Jarring on 17 January 1968 if Egypt was ready to meet with Israel if the Israelis accepted Resolution 242 in total, including withdrawal, the Egyptian Foreign Minister Muhammed Riad agreed to sit down for indirect negotiations with the Israelis before a removal of the Israeli forces took place. He said that when Egypt got a full answer from Israel, "we shall move with Jarring towards [the] next step and speak with him about finding a practical and constructive method for implementation."³⁶ Thus the two Arab states yielded on their demands, and accepted a triangular mediation situation with Jarring as the middle man.³⁷ Previously the two Arab states had not accepted any form of negotiations, but demanded that Israel withdraw from all occupied territories before anything could be discussed.

Egypt and Jordan were eager to keep the Jarring mission moving. It was the only political option at the time and a military solution was impossible. An Arab concession would in addition reward Egypt and Jordan with international goodwill, and prevent them from being blamed if the question should return to the Security Council. Another conceivable reason for moderation was the hope that Arab willingness to consider a diplomatic solution would sway the US to put pressure on Israel to return the occupied areas to the Arab countries. However, there were strings attached to Riad's moderated statement. He made it clear that no further movement was possible on part of the two Arab countries until Israel declared its readiness to implement the resolution.³⁸

Israel did not take Jarring's bait. When Jarring presented the formula to the Israeli Foreign Minister, Abba Eban answered: "We are ready to seek agreement on the establishment of peace in a negotiation embracing all matters included in the Security Council resolution of 22 November 1967 which either side may wish to raise."³⁹ The Israelis avoided the word 'accept' in their answer to Jarring, the exact word he was seeking in order to commit Jordan and Egypt to negotiations over

³⁵ Touval, 1982: p.147

³⁶ NA box 1804, 19 January 1968: cable from Bergus, Cairo to the Secretary; NA box 1805, 12 February 1968: circular cable from Rusk, DeptSt

³⁷ Quandt, 1993: pp. 4-5

³⁸ NA box 1805, 12 February 1968: circular cable from Rusk, DeptSt; NA box 1806, 2.March 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary; Touval, 1982: p.145

³⁹ NA box 1805, 12 February 1968: circular cable from Rusk, DeptSt; Touval, 1982: p.147

substantive issues. Playing around with Jarring's formula, Israel neither communicated an outright refusal nor an explicit acceptance of Resolution 242.⁴⁰

It can be hard to see how Israel could justify its stubborn unwillingness to accept Resolution 242. The ambiguous resolution had been prodded through at the UN by the US in order to make it acceptable to Israel. The wording of Resolution 242 was chosen by the Security Council above many Soviet and Arab drafts that called for withdrawal before peace. The use of ambiguous language allowed Israel to impose conditions on its withdrawal, and the resolution must therefore be seen as a victory for Israeli hardliners.⁴¹ Because of the vague wording of the resolution, it need not be assumed that Israel risked much by stating its acceptance. Yet Israel refused to accept it explicitly.

The rigid Israeli position on acceptance stemmed at least in part from the merging in January 1968 of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol's party, the Alignment, with Rafi.⁴² Rafi was a faction that had split from the Alignment in 1965 for the reason that it found Eshkol's policy towards the Arab to be too moderate.⁴³ The reunion had implications for Israeli foreign policy and contributed to increased rigidity in the sphere of foreign policy.⁴⁴ The moderate wing refrained from using their majority to promote a pragmatic foreign policy for fear that the new party, Israel Labour Party, would fall apart as a result.

Another factor was that the Israelis suspected that the Arabs would renew their demand that withdrawal had to start before any kind of negotiations could take place if Israel stated its willingness to implement Resolution 242, according to their different interpretations of the resolution.⁴⁵ It was much easier for Israel to withdraw from the talks if it was not committed to the ambiguous resolution. In addition, the Israelis were not prepared to be part of indirect negotiations in which its statehood was not recognized by the other side. Israel was adequately adamant in its demand for a real change in its relations with the Arab world. In his answer to Jarring's formula, Abba Eban expressed the Israeli view that Jarring's function was to 'convene' representatives of the

⁴⁰ Abba Eban's answer to Jarring on 1 February 1968: "In reply to comments made by [Egypt] I can affirm that we are ready to seek agreement on the establishment of peace in a negotiation embracing all matters included in the SC Res. 22 Nov 67 which either side wish to raise. [...] You raised the possibility that I give you a letter. I would have no difficulty if so desired by [Egypt] in giving you a letter, [...] if you could tell me now or later that there would be a reciprocal Egyptian readiness to discuss the matters included in the SC Res simultaneously and as a whole, and also that such an exchange of letters would be followed by the beginning of negotiations without further intermediate stages. On the matter of the negotiating procedure too, we would like to be helpful. You may tell [Egypt] that we would be willing for the Special Representative of the Secretary General to convene the representatives of the two governments." NA box 1805, 12 February 1968: circular cable from Rusk, DeptSt

⁴¹ Neff, 1988: pp.334-350; Neff, 1995: p.100; Shlaim, 2001: p.260

⁴² See chapter 4: pp.68-70

⁴³ Eshkol's foreign policy was denounced as dangerous and said to weaken the deterrent power of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). Shlaim, 2001: pp.223-224

⁴⁴ Shlaim, 2001: pp.223-224, 262

⁴⁵ NA box 1806, 2 March 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary

adversaries.⁴⁶ This implied a demand for direct negotiations, implying recognition, in which Jarring at best would merely stand by the conference door, not taking part in the discussions.⁴⁷

The Israelis of the time were highly adept at keeping up the pretence of diplomatic dialogue while in fact relying on its own overt power and the presumed support of the US to maintain its position. After some time had passed, it became clear that the US would not insist on a total Israeli withdrawal. The Israeli position as result was allowed to harden. The US Assistant Secretary of State, Joseph J. Sisco urged the Israelis to accept Resolution 242.⁴⁸ His view was that the Israeli position was fully protected in the resolution. Considering all the time and effort the Security Council had used to find a formula that was acceptable to Israel, US officials did not see any need to avoid an explicit acceptance of the resolution.⁴⁹ However, other than verbal frustration and encouragement communicated to Israel, the sources indicate no actual American pressure on Israel to accept the resolution.

Jarring was pessimistic over the fact that the Israelis were receptive to the resolution contingent upon direct negotiations. He knew direct negotiations without a third party present would be unacceptable to Egypt and Jordan, for the exact reason that this would have been regarded as recognition of the state of Israel.

The US may be criticised for not pressuring Israel into accepting resolution 242. However, did Jarring allow for American participation? One can certainly argue that Jarring kept to his own counsel and did not open up for outside assistance. Over a drink with the Swedish ambassador in Cairo on 18 January 1968, Jarring refused to give away any information and told the ambassador that he was only reporting to the UN Secretary General.⁵⁰ Jarring was extremely cautious to avoid leaks from any of his conversation regarding the Middle East. The meetings of Jarring and U Thant were, for instance, largely of an oral character. Very few notes were taken, and none were distributed following these meetings in order to reduce the risk of any minutes from important conversations falling into the wrong hands. Outsiders had to rely on reports from the authorities in Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and to a certain extent Lebanon to keep track of Jarring's work. This was even the case with the superpowers. US officials stationed in the Middle East reported to Washington that they were

⁴⁶ NA box 1805, 12 February 1968: circular cable from Rusk, DeptSt; NA box 1805, 10 February 1968: cable from Symmes, Amman to the secretary

⁴⁷ NA box 1805, 10 February 1968: cable from Symmes, Amman to the secretary

⁴⁸ Because Secretary of State, Dean Rusk was devoting much of his time to Vietnam, UN Ambassador Arthur Goldberg (an ardent Zionist in close cooperation with the Israeli delegation to the UN) was, in essence, in charge of US policy in the Middle East during and shortly after the Six-Day War in June 1967. Joseph Sisco worked closely with Goldberg until the U.N. ambassador left government service in the spring of 1968. Sisco then became the chief US mediator in the Middle East under Johnson. Neff, 1995: p.139

⁴⁹ NA box 1805, 28 February 1968, cable from Rusk to Tel Aviv; Neff, 1988: p.336

⁵⁰ NA box 1804, 26 January 1968: cable from Bergus, Cairo to the Secretary

puzzled by the fact that Jarring did not seek superpower support to bolster his mission.⁵¹ This indicates how unique and peculiar Jarring's approach was. However, as mentioned above, Jarring worried that involving outside powers would undermine his authority and possibly stimulate the adversaries to reject his mission and return the question to the Security Council.

Jarring was isolating himself from outside powers, yet one could argue that the acceptance of Resolution 242 would have been in the interest of the Americans regardless of progress in the Jarring mission. The US had, as mentioned, played an active role in getting a resolution adopted in the Security Council that was acceptable to Israel. Linked to the notion that the US was not interested in getting deeply involved in the conflict, one should assume that an explicit acceptance of the resolution, and hence the survival of the Jarring mission, would be in the interest of the US. If the Jarring mission was to fail, the blame would mainly be placed on the Israelis for not accepting Resolution 242. This would put both Israel and the US in an unfavourable position, while the Soviets could "fly high and in good international company".⁵² The ball would then again be placed in the court of the superpowers on the Security Council. Although anxious to prevent a Council meeting, the American low profile attitude still prevailed with regards to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The US officials kept pondering the situation, resisting any aspirations involving the use of sustained time and effort as long as the situation did not appear to blow up in their faces. The Israeli evasive behaviour was thereby bolstered.

The Israeli reluctance to accept the resolution may in turn have been affected by the increasingly complex situation surrounding the Jarring mission. During the war, many Palestinians fled to neighboring Arab states, especially Jordan, which had the effect of de-stabilizing their political systems.⁵³ Within months, Israel was again the target of a wave of attacks originating from the Palestinians within the occupied territories, and from Jordan. King Hussein was no longer able to control them. The Israelis may as a result have lost confidence in the Arab willingness to reach a genuine peace agreement.

These Palestinian acts of violence were in part stimulated by Israeli confiscation and construction activities in Jerusalem and other occupied areas. This caused Arab concern regarding the negotiability of the occupied territories. Trying to prevent escalation of the situation, the US Secretary of State sent a letter of protest to the Israeli Foreign Minister, threatening to cancel diplomatic support in the Security Council if the question of Jerusalem was raised there. In the Secretary's letter he also indirectly threatened to cancel the promise of increased deliverances of

⁵¹ NA box 1804, 31 January 1968: cable from Porter, Lebanon to the Secretary

⁵² NA box 1805, 5 February 1968: cable from Campbell, Jerusalem to the Secretary

⁵³ See chapter 4: pp.74-77

Skyhawk aircrafts to Israel if the construction and demolition work in Jerusalem were not discontinued.⁵⁴ However, the Americans did not condemn the Israeli actions explicitly, and their words were ignored by Israel. Instead the Israeli government turned its attention to wider issues regarding settlements in the other occupied territories as well.⁵⁵ By the beginning of 1968, Israel had cautiously established pioneering settlements in every one of the occupied territories. In September the same year, the Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol announced that the occupied territories would no longer be regarded as enemy territory.⁵⁶ The status of the occupied territories was in the process of changing.⁵⁷ Through this process, Israel had bought time by avoiding an acceptance of the resolution. Israel had counteracted any kind of negotiations from taking place where they might be compelled to make concessions. By creating facts on the ground by means of confiscating Palestinian property and constructing buildings, Israel could with greater potency claim its right to retain the occupied land.

In an effort to calm the situation and move a step forward, Jarring attempted to narrow the scope of the acceptance formula, by asking Israel, Jordan and Egypt what secure and recognized boundaries would entail for each of them. If an Israeli withdrawal should ever be possible, or maybe even a discussion of such, there had to be some kind of agreement on how far the Israelis should withdraw. Resolution 242 spoke of secure boundaries for all the countries concerned, but it did not define where those boundaries would be drawn. Jarring did, however, not get a clear-cut answer. In Egypt's opinion, secure and recognized boundaries were the borders as they existed before 5 June 1967. The Jordanian foreign minister said that the Arab position would depend on what Israel could accept and do, and that no further movement was possible until they heard Israel's official acceptance.⁵⁸ The Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban, on the other hand, said this could only be established in the course of negotiations.⁵⁹

By late February 1968, Jarring kept juggling the three controversial concepts of acceptance, negotiations and implementation at the same time. He got no further with untangling the knot by means of his formula for acceptance.

⁵⁴ NA box 1805, 13 February 1968: cable from Rusk to Barbour, Tel Aviv

⁵⁵ Neff, 1995: p.138-141, 152-153

⁵⁶ Eshkol faced increasingly powerful elements within Israel who wished to retain the occupied land. Protests from the US alleged that Israel had broken its earlier promise not to retain the territories, however Washington took no action. Neff, 1995: p.153

⁵⁷ Altering the status of the occupied territories could be defended by the fact that the areas occupied by Israel in the Six-Day War were disputed before 1967. In the war in 1949 they were occupied by Egypt, Jordan and Israel. Israel consequently claimed that the Arabs did not have any more right than the Israelis to administer the areas intended for the Palestinians. The areas had no sovereign. NA box 1806, 2 March 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary; Thant, 1978: p.296

⁵⁸ NA box 1805, 12 February 1968: circular cable from Rusk, DeptSt

⁵⁹ NA box 1804, 1 January 1968: cable from Bergus, Cairo to the Secretary; Krasno, 1990: p.11-12

An Invitation to Cyprus

Depressed by the continuing deadlock in the Middle East situation and worn-out from the physical strain of flying from one city to another at such a pace, Jarring travelled to New York on 28 February 1968.⁶⁰ There, he wished to confer with U Thant on what his next step should be, and also sought to discuss the state of affairs with American and Russian representatives at the UN. Jarring had not spoken directly to US and Soviet officials during the nearly three months that had passed since embarking on his mission in December 1967. Various representatives from outside powers had tried to discuss the mission with Jarring during his shuttling in the Middle East, but Jarring had so far declined every request on the ground that if he met with one power he would be unable to turn down others.⁶¹ Besides being worried about leaks, he feared he would lose trust with the parties, and had therefore carried out his diplomacy quietly on his own.

Now, however, he cautiously opened up for discussions with outside powers. Jarring's view of the calculations of the major outside powers as well as the local powers may have induced him to revise his approach. Jarring's opinion had all along been that the interests of the superpowers in the area were an underlying problem, because they held various and conflicting interests.⁶² The superpowers would like a solution to the conflict, but the way they looked at the balance sheets of gains and losses did not necessarily serve to promote peace in the area. Each superpower was identified with their respective clients in the region. A concession from one client would be seen as a triumph not only for the antagonist, but also for its patron. To browbeat its own client state into compromise bore implications for the superpower's own influence and standing in the area.⁶³ Despite this, Jarring might have acknowledged that the situation could benefit from co-operation with countries holding powerful leverage in the area. Jarring had no means of changing the situation on his own.

The March Formula

The main outcome of the discussions Jarring held with U Thant and the representatives of the two superpowers at the UN was the decision that Jarring's next step should be to invite the parties to Cyprus for talks. To assemble representatives from Jordan, Egypt and Israel on Cyprus would relieve the now 61-year-old Jarring from some of the strain of frequent flying between the capitals of the Middle East. It would hopefully also help to bridge the gap to some sort of negotiation. The question was how to conduct these conferences, and whether the meetings

⁶⁰ NA box 1804, 24 January 1968: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv to the Secretary

⁶¹ NA box 1805, 6 February 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary

⁶² NA box 1805, 28 February 1968: cable from Barbour to the Secretary

⁶³ Touval, 1982: pp.160-164

should be direct or indirect. A possible model for the proposed meetings on Cyprus was the manner in which similar talks had been conducted on Rhodes in 1949, under the UN chairmanship of Ralph Bunche. The Rhodes negotiations were at the time presumed to have been successful, and were seen as a good model for Jarring to plan the conferences on Cyprus. One of the positive memories from Rhodes was the framework for the talks. The adversaries all lived in the same hotel on the Island. The delegations present in the Rhodes negotiations have in retrospect claimed that it was effective to make the representatives of the parties live so close together. The proximity was said to lead to socialisation between the parties, which again eased the tense atmosphere which caused the adversaries to alter their rigid views of one another.⁶⁴ However, little was known at the time of the Jarring talks as to how the 1949 cease-fire agreements were in fact reached.⁶⁵

The idea to follow the Rhodes-style at a potential conference between the adversaries was an Israeli proposal to begin with. Jarring and the Israeli representatives discussed the idea before Jarring left for New York in late February, but as we shall see, the procedures of the Rhodes meetings were not public knowledge in 1968. When discussing the approach on Cyprus, the Israelis found Jarring to be poorly informed regarding what in fact had taken place on Rhodes. They showed him records and communiqués from secret UN files informing that direct negotiations had been held on Rhodes under Bunche's chairmanship.⁶⁶

Recent research has shown that negotiations on Rhodes were in fact conducted both separately and face to face.⁶⁷ However, the official version at the time was that there were no direct negotiations. Direct negotiations would have implied that Egypt recognized Israel as a state already in 1949.⁶⁸ This was controversial because Egypt did not officially accept Israeli statehood until the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt from Camp David in 1978. Hence, the accounts held in 1968 by the two participants to the Rhodes talks were contradictory. On one side, the Israeli participants claimed that there had been direct negotiation on Rhodes. On the other, the Egyptian participants asserted that the exchanges had taken place indirectly through the UN mediator and denied the direct negotiations which had in fact taken place.

Jarring talked quite a lot to the mediator at Rhodes himself, Ralph Bunche, regarding the idea to invite the parties to conferences.⁶⁹ Bunche had told Jarring that he at the time had thought that the

⁶⁴ Næser, Ingrid, 2005: p.63

⁶⁵ See also chapter 6: pp.116-118

⁶⁶ NA box 1805, 28 February 1968: cable from Barbour to the Secretary

⁶⁷ Næser, 2005: p.107

⁶⁸ Næser, 2005: p.107

⁶⁹ Interview with Göran Berg, 7 December 2006

armistice negotiations at Rhodes were only a first step towards a full peace.⁷⁰ He had deliberately refrained from reporting on the performances and interactions that took place on Rhodes in documents meant for the public eye. This was done in order to avoid causing commotion, and improve the chances of replacing the cease-fire agreement with a genuine peace in the future. As a result, the story of the Rhodes talks was presented by each side according to what served their interests. When Jarring stepped into the picture “the Rhodes waters [had] been so muddied by self-serving interpretations that one [couldn’t] see the formula for the mud.”⁷¹ In Bunche’s own words: “This is the sort of thing where each side makes its own interpretations and sometimes, when it suits its convenience, history gets invented.”⁷²

Just as the parties to the conflict could use the confusing memories of Rhodes to their own best interests, the superpowers could also interpret them to their advantage. At the UN, the Soviets held that there was no need for a Rhodes-procedure because there was already an indirect contact between the adversaries through Jarring. The Russians would not press Egypt or Jordan to go to Cyprus, because a joint meeting on Cyprus was more likely to lead to Arab concessions than if they were to carry on communicating as they were.⁷³ However, Jarring got full support from the American UN ambassador, Arthur Goldberg, for the suggestion of Rhodes-type talks on Cyprus. By specifying the importance of the Rhodes aspect of the proposed conference, Goldberg implied American support for the Israeli notion that such talks should involve all methods used by Bunche, including direct negotiations. This notion was backed up by the State Department.⁷⁴ Jarring’s own vision for a potential conference on Cyprus was that it could include all kinds of negotiations between the two sides.⁷⁵

Back in the Middle East in early March, Jarring had a letter ready for Cairo, Amman and Tel Aviv that he proposed the parties sign and return to him. The letter contained two main points: Acceptance of Resolution 242 and an invitation to Cyprus.

“The governments of Israel and Egypt (or Jordan) have both indicated to me that they accept Security Council resolution 242 of 22 November 1967 for achieving a peaceful and accepted settlement of the Mideast question and intend to devise arrangements under my auspices for the implementation of the provisions of the resolution. [...] In view of the urgency of the situation, with a view to expediting efforts to reach settlement, I have

⁷⁰ During the Jarring mission, Ralph Bunche was the Undersecretary General to the UN.

⁷¹ Urquhart, 1993: p.222-223

⁷² Urquhart, 1993: p.222-223, NA box 1806, 7 March 1968: cable from Rusk to Symmes, Amman

⁷³ NA box 1806, 5 March 1968: cable from Rusk to London

⁷⁴ NA box 1806, 2 March 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary; NA box 1806, 7 March 1968: cable from Rusk to Symmes, Amman

⁷⁵ NA box 1806, 12 March 1968: cable from Rusk to Tel Aviv; NA box 1806, 2 March 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary; NA box 1806, 7 March 1968: cable from Rusk to Symmes, Amman

therefore invited the two governments to meet with me for conferences within the framework of the Security Council resolution [...] in Cyprus.”⁷⁶

By including both the question of acceptance and the invitation to conferences, Jarring hoped that he could make a compromise of the difficulties from the acceptance-formula in January in his new proposal. Jarring went one step closer to the Israeli demand for negotiations before any implementation. The wording of the proposal was, however, once more “constructively ambiguous” to improve the chances of acceptance from both sides.⁷⁷ Optimistically, Israel was to accept the resolution for the reason that some sort of negotiations would be instigated on Cyprus. In return for an Israeli acceptance of Resolution 242, Jarring hoped that Jordan and Egypt would stand by their word from January and accept at least indirect negotiations on the island.

Jarring did not seem convinced that the adversaries would accept the invitation. He expressed his concern at the UN that the possibilities for joint talks were much smaller in 1968 than at the time of the Rhodes talks. The passing of twenty years, two wars and a much enlarged refugee problem had altered the conditions. Jarring was especially worried that Egypt would refuse to participate considering the lack of an Israeli acceptance of Resolution 242 and that Egypt would insist on indirect negotiations, since Jarring’s new proposal was closer to the Israeli stance.⁷⁸

The internal situations in Egypt and Jordan made it more difficult to enter into talks than what had been the case in 1949. First of all, both countries faced criticism from other Arab states on which they were financially dependent.⁷⁹ If Egypt or Jordan engaged in direct or indirect talks with Israel on Cyprus, they ran the risk that the three wealthy Arab nations, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Libya, would claim that the Khartoum agreement between the Arab heads of state from August/September 1967 of no negotiation with Israel had been violated, and cut their subsidies to them.⁸⁰ The fact that Israel still had not accepted the resolution was receiving increasing criticism from the Arab world, making it even more difficult for the Arabs to enter into talks with Israel. The Israeli expropriation, demolition and construction moves in the occupied areas, further fuelled the general Arab opposition against negotiations with Israel at any level. Both the Egyptian and Jordanian regimes also faced domestic difficulties. Nasser, as a consequence introduced internal

⁷⁶ NA box 1807, 1 April 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary

⁷⁷ NA box 1806, 12 March 1968: cable from Rusk to Tel Aviv; NA box 1806, 2 March 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary; NA box 1806, 7 March 1968: cable from Rusk to Symmes, Amman

⁷⁸ NA box 1806, 2 March 1968: cable from USUN to the Secretary

⁷⁹ See chapter 2: pp.28-29

⁸⁰ NA box 1806, 2 March 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary; NA box 1807, 21 March 1968: cable from Bergus, Cairo to the secretary

reforms to calm the situation. The domestic scene occupied Nasser throughout the spring and early summer of 1968, and increased his reluctance to appear indecisive in his opposition to Israel.⁸¹

King Hussein had shown considerable flexibility in his approach to the Jarring mission. In contrast to Israel and Egypt, he had sought to take a moderate approach in the face of domestic and Arab opposition from abroad.⁸² Realizing the limits of US willingness to pressure Israel to return the occupied territories, Jordan was unwilling to risk getting cut off from Arab subsidies by entering into separate negotiations with Israel without the support of Egypt.⁸³ Domestically, King Hussein had to struggle with the challenge of the increased Palestinian population in Jordan as a result of the new refugees in the country following the Six-Day War.⁸⁴ The period following the 1967 War saw an upsurge in the power and importance of Palestinian resistance elements in Jordan.⁸⁵ The heavily armed Palestinian guerrilla organizations were opposed to a peace agreement with Israel, and constituted a growing threat to the sovereignty and security of the Hashemite state, making the King increasingly dependant on the support of its neighbouring states. King Hussein was willing to enter into negotiations with Israel, but not without Egypt.

The Egyptian and Jordanian room for manoeuvre thus appeared small, and the prospect of any contact with Israel at the time seemed risky. Yet the people involved in the Jarring mission hoped that the risk of deteriorating relations with the UN would make it problematic for the adversaries to turn down an invitation to Cyprus from Jarring.⁸⁶ Because the Israeli stance toward the March initiative was positive and because he had US backing to make the invitation Jarring thought that there might be an opportunity for meetings at Cyprus under his auspices.⁸⁷

When Jarring presented his letter to Egypt on 7 March 1968, however, the Egyptians immediately rejected Jarring's proposal. The Egyptian Foreign Minister Riad stated that recent proclamations by Israeli leaders had shown that they were following an expansionist line. It was no longer sufficient for them that Israel gave its guarantee to implement the resolution. Israel would have to withdraw completely from the occupied territories before the other provisions of the resolution could be discussed.⁸⁸ The intention of Rhodes-style negotiations on Cyprus was another

⁸¹ Rubinstein, 1977: p.51-54

⁸² NA box 1807, 26 March 1968: cable from Symmes, Amman to the Secretary

⁸³ Sayigh & Shlaim, 2003: p.119

⁸⁴ See chapter 4: pp.74-77

⁸⁵ A civil war broke out in Jordan between the Jordanian government and the Palestinian resistance groups. For more information, see chapter 4.

⁸⁶ Kriesberg, 1992: 90

⁸⁷ NA box 1806, 1 March 1968: information memorandum from Handley and Sisco, DeptSt to the secretary; NA box 1805, 28 February 1968, cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv to the Secretary; Eban, 1977: p.455; Thant, 1978: p.296; Touval, 1982: p.147

⁸⁸ UN Document S/10070, 4 January 1971 (<http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf>, 13. September 2006); NA box 1806, 12 March 1968: cable from Rusk to Tel Aviv

factor that made it difficult for Egypt to accept the invitation. The “Rhodes-formula” was intentionally not mentioned by Jarring in the letter because of the different accounts held by the adversaries. Jarring explained to the parties upon deliverance that the term “conferences” could mean all kinds of negotiations between the two sides.⁸⁹ However, speculations in the media over Rhodes-style talks in connection with the March-formula had surfaced. The Egyptian response to Jarring’s letter was seen as a return to the “safe position” held by Egypt shortly after the Six-Day War, since it withdrew its willingness to enter into indirect negotiations with Israel. Jarring was very disappointed with the Egyptian reply. He said that it was the most negative reply he had ever received in Cairo and that he felt he was back at square one.⁹⁰

According to his own strategy, Jarring could not formally present the text to the parties unless he had the agreement from all of them.⁹¹ Because of the immediate Egyptian rejection, the March formula was accordingly neither shown formally to Israel nor Jordan. Nevertheless, following the Egyptian rejection, Abba Eban stated that the Israeli reply would have been positive if it had been accepted by the other side and if conferences were held in accordance with the Rhodes formula, implying that the Israelis would demand face-to-face negotiations.⁹² It is worth noting that the Israeli post mortem acceptance can be seen as tactical. Their goodwill was not risky when the proposal had been rejected by the other side. Israel was assured that it would not need to make any concession as a consequence of the acceptance. The proposal could, however, still be exploited. Although invalid, an acceptance of Jarring’s letter could reward Israel with goodwill from Jarring and the international society. However, it did not have the desired effect on Jarring.

A Jordanian Revision

Jordan responded to Jarring’s letter with the same negative response that Egypt had delivered. Foreign minister Abdul Munim Rifai explained that Jordan rejected the original formula on the grounds that the words ‘to devise arrangements’ were taken to mean a call for a peace treaty. Rifai also claimed that Cyprus had become a dirty word. There had been too much publicity regarding the possibilities for a meeting there. The small island would be filled with journalists.⁹³ However, Jordan was willing to move towards negotiations, because in principle the proposed meeting with Israel was not unacceptable to Jordan. The implied reason for rejecting Jarring’s letter was that Jordan could not move forward without Egypt. Jordanian authorities demonstrated their willingness to act as a matchmaker by proposing a modified version of Jarring’s original text

⁸⁹ NA box 1806, 12 March 1968: cable from Rusk to Tel Aviv

⁹⁰ NA box 1806, 12 March 1968: cable from Rusk to Tel Aviv

⁹¹ Eban, 1977: p.455

⁹² NA box 1806, 12 March 1968: cable from Rusk to Tel Aviv

⁹³ NA box 1806, 13 March 1968: cable from Amman to the Secretary

on 16 April 1968. The hope was that this revision would also make the proposal acceptable to the Egyptians.⁹⁴

The Jordanian formula called for meetings between Jarring and the parties in New York, and apart from the changed venue, it included a specific demand for indirect negotiations. It is not instantly clear why Rifai proposed meetings in New York, because holding the talks in New York would not ease the pressure from the media, which Rifai used as an explanation for the relocation. Yet it must have been easier for Jordan and Egypt to legitimize talks with Israel under the cover of the UN, than to meet on Cyprus. All discussions surrounding Cyprus had brought to mind the negotiations on Rhodes. The talk about pursuing a Rhodes-style meeting had evoked much opposition with the Arab participants because they knew there had been direct negotiations at Rhodes. This plausibly created fear amongst the Arab representatives and governments that such negotiations would eventually come about and that the story of Rhodes would leak out in the press and cause a sensation. In addition, the Jordanians did not believe that Jarring would manage to bring about successful negotiations. Jordanian foreign minister Rifai said that the Jordanians had an extremely poor opinion of Jarring's initiative, his forcefulness and his negotiating ability. It was therefore important to have other UN officials near by to help. Rifai argued that New York would be a better location.⁹⁵

Israel did not find the revised Jordanian proposal acceptable. To Israel the reason why the original March formula was acceptable, at least in theory, was the invitation of Jordan, Egypt and Israel to participate in conferences. To Israel, 'conferences' meant that all parties would meet in the same room.⁹⁶ The Israelis appears to have been playing a game of cat and mouse. They gave the impression that they could accept certain elements, but there were always singular words that they vehemently dismissed. This may be interpreted as a way of slowing the process and avoiding substantive concessions, while at the same time keeping the mission alive. Such a course of action would buy the Israelis time to achieve objectives on the ground and provide further reasons not to yield the territories occupied during the Six-Days War. Jarring complained that his impression was that Israel was dealing from a position of political and military strength, and that even if a meeting was to take place with Jordan and Egypt, he thought that Israel would concede little or nothing.⁹⁷

Jarring's military adviser Lieutenant Colonel Koho, reported a temporary and possibly permanent standstill in the Jarring mission, and also that some of its participants, if not all, would

⁹⁴ UN Document S/10070, 4 January 1971 (<http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf>, 13 September 2006); NA box 1806, 13 March 1968: cable from Amman to the Secretary;

NA box 1807, 19 March 1968: cable from Buffum, USUN to the Secretary

⁹⁵ NA box 1806, 13 March 1968: cable from Symmes, Amman to the Secretary

⁹⁶ NA box 1808, 18 April 1968: cable from USUN to the Secretary ;Eban, 1977: p.455

⁹⁷ NA box 1807, 20 March 1968: cable from Rusk to Cairo

return to New York shortly. This expressed pessimism created a fear that Jarring would leave his mission for good, and obviously gave an impetus for all actors interested in keeping the mission alive to demonstrate their cooperation. Jordan was quick to pronounce its collaboration and reaffirmed the Jordanian acceptance of Resolution 242. Jordanian Foreign Minister Abdul Munim Rifai claimed that if they could get an Israeli acceptance of their proposed formula, Egypt could be persuaded to come along for the opening of a conference.⁹⁸ If this was accomplished, Jordan would go anywhere for discussions even if Cairo was unwilling.

The situation was also unfavourable for the superpowers: If Jarring threw in the towel, the superpowers would be faced with a new set of problems and be forced to consider new steps.⁹⁹ Unwilling to deal with the conflict themselves and hoping to keep the complex issue inside a UN setting, it was important to keep the channel through Jarring open. In addition, Israel did not want the conflict to return to the Security Council. Israel refused to accept the Jordanian revision, but was persuaded by the US to state its official acceptance of the original March formula.¹⁰⁰ This move might buy Israel more time, while at the same time a stated acceptance of Jarring's original formula could reduce the amount of blame placed on Israel should Jarring withdraw from the Middle East diplomacy.

Jarring held that there was nothing new in the information, because the Israeli acceptance of the March formula did not include the two new phrases requested by Jordan.¹⁰¹ Jarring was reluctant to forward the Israeli letter, but after considerable persuasion from Israel and the US, Jarring promised to transmit the letter to Jordan. Unwilling to deceive the Jordanians, Jarring insisted that he would point out to the Jordanian king that the Israeli language did not include Jordan's counter suggestion. Jarring would also mention to the Jordanians that he did not consider the Israeli acceptance to mean that Israel would implement the resolution.¹⁰²

Jarring's negative response to the Israeli acceptance of the original March-formula caused reactions among the onlookers. Harrison M. Symmes, the American ambassador to Jordan, concluded that Jarring's reaction to Israel was dangerous to the situation because he was highlighting mutual reservations which reinforced the resistance to even the most minor concessions by either party.¹⁰³ The written Israeli statement actually implied an acceptance of Resolution 242. William B. Buffum, the American deputy ambassador to the UN, conveyed the same concern to Undersecretary General Ralph Bunche, saying that Jarring was putting the positions of the adversaries in too stark

⁹⁸ NA box 1807, 3 April 1968: cable from Symmes, Amman to the Secretary

⁹⁹ NA box 1808, 30 April 1968: cable from Rusk to Moscow

¹⁰⁰ NA box 1807, 6 April 1968: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv to the Secretary

¹⁰¹ NA box 1808, 8 April 1968: cable from Rusk to Barbour, Tel Aviv

¹⁰² NA box 1808, 8 April 1968: cable from Rusk to Barbour, Tel Aviv

¹⁰³ NA box 1807, 28 March 1968: airgram from Symmes, Amman to the Secretary

and negative terms in his consultations. Buffum asked Bunche to encourage Jarring to accentuate the positive elements more than he had been doing and Bunche agreed that the manner in which Jarring had handled the parties had been a problem. He had recently discussed this difficulty with the Secretary General and U Thant planned to go over this problem with Jarring at a breakfast meeting with him in Tehran. Bunche said that the Secretary General would try and condition Jarring not to let the parties elicit categorical statements from him about attitudes or intentions of the other side.¹⁰⁴

Jarring's treatment of the Israeli acceptance of the 10 March formula was, however, in keeping with his style. Israel and the US wanted Jarring to make the issues fuzzy, because in that way it would be easier for Israel to accept a proposal. Jarring would however not negotiate on the basis of initial conditions that did not really mean what they appeared to mean. Making conditions fuzzy at Israel's request would imply an attempt at pushing the Arabs further without explicit Israeli concessions. Jarring refused to fudge the issues to Israel's advantage, but he had no power with which to sway the adversaries. Without the means to influence the situation, Jarring preferred not to strive for a solution that would imply asymmetrical treatment of the two sides. Consequently, both sides were left disappointed.

Jarring travelled to Amman to forward the message to the Jordanian authorities. By doing this he acted somewhat indecisively, since he had first claimed he would not do so. He took a step away from his role as a figurative mailbox by first refusing to transmit the message, and in addition by later pointing out the differences between the Israeli acceptance and Jordan's revised formula to the Jordanians. Yet despite Jarring's reservations, Jordan felt that the Israeli move represented a step forward and was interested in building on this progress. The Jordanian ability to manoeuvre independently was curtailed by its dependence on Egypt and other Arab states. Jordan therefore attempted to match the Israeli and Egyptian needs in order to bring the two countries together: Because Israel had not accepted the Jordanian revised formula, there was a need for an interpretive statement, implying a guarantee, from the US regarding the actual meaning of Israel's acceptance. If Jordan and Egypt could get such a superpower guarantee, Rifai held that Egyptian and Jordanian representatives would be in New York ready for talks under Jarring's auspices in a matter of days. After the talks had started, Jordan would be ready "to move very far very fast" regardless of what the Egyptians might do.¹⁰⁵ Jarring said he could not ask for such a statement, but suggested that foreign minister Rifai should ask the American Ambassador to Amman, Harrison M. Symmes for such a statement.

¹⁰⁴ NA box 1808, 22 April 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary

¹⁰⁵ NA box 1808, 12 April 1968: cable from Rusk to Symmes, Amman

When the American Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, was informed about Jarring's suggestion, he was astonished that Jarring could propose this. Jarring by this action undermined his own intention of restricting his substantive efforts to the parties directly concerned. Such an interpretive statement would not be given by the US.¹⁰⁶ In other words, Jarring did not receive any backing from the US at this point. Rusk further claimed that such a statement was not necessary because an acceptance of a formula which Jarring himself had devised should be considered a step forward by Jarring. If questions arose as to interpretations of the formula, Jarring should seek to nail those down by further discussions with the parties. Furthermore, a US guarantee would imply a breach of confidence, since it would lend support to the view that the Israeli statement was insufficient as it stood.¹⁰⁷ The US was not going to push Israel around.

The American reaction was perceivably exactly what Jarring tried to avoid by asking Riad to request such a statement independently. If Jarring had asked directly he would have been exposed to criticism from Israel, and perhaps others, for exceeding his mandate. Moreover, the blame for a possible rejection of the request would not be placed on Jarring if the Jordanians asked themselves. Jarring's suggestion to have Riad ask for an American statement may have been an attempt at acquiring indirect US backing for the mission. The Americans, however, disagreed with Jarring's actions at this point. He had no right to indicate to the adversaries that the US was an ostensible actor in the mission. The Americans wished to remain outside the crossfire of the mission, considering all the problems already jamming the Johnson administration. The US was heavily involved in Vietnam and dissent grew domestically over the American handling of that war. In addition urban riots, political reverses, and doubts about administration programs to elevate poor people into the middle class and transform America into a Great Society weighed the administration down. The Johnson administration was attacked by "friends and foes alike".¹⁰⁸ "1968 was one of the worst years in American history".¹⁰⁹

Egypt had continued to insist on a prior declaration by Israel of its intent to withdraw from the occupied areas. However, on 9 May, the evening of Jarring's departure from the area, the Egyptian Foreign Minister Riad accepted the March invitation as modified by Jordan. The last minute approval was probably an attempt to avoid carrying all the blame if Jarring threw in the towel. All three countries now agreed to meet, although they did not agree on one joint formula for an invitation. An agreement on where and how was nowhere in sight. Jarring therefore decided not

¹⁰⁶ NA box 1808, 12 April 1968: cable from Rusk to Symmes, Amman

¹⁰⁷ NA box 1808, 12 April 1968: cable from Rusk to Symmes, Amman

¹⁰⁸ Dallek, Robert: *Flawed Giant. Lyndon Johnson and His Times 1961-1973*, 1998: p.391

¹⁰⁹ Dallek, 1998: text to photo between pp. 434 and 435

to issue a formal invitation because he “felt that a forced acceptance obtained by such an invitation would not be helpful.”¹¹⁰

The failure of Jarring’s invitation to talks on Cyprus may partly be attributed to Jarring’s insecure conduct, caused by the concern that either party would withdraw their fragile acceptance of his mission if he stepped on any toes. As a consequence, Jarring constantly looked over his shoulder and would not risk his position by interpreting the statements of the parties. The consequence in this case was that Jarring allowed the parties to throw the ball around without pushing forward a single proposal.¹¹¹ Two different invitations therefore stood until Jarring discarded both. Did Jarring seek superpower co-operation at this point? And if that was the case, why now? After the failure with the acceptance formula Jarring was obviously influenced to seek a new approach. Jarring apparently looked to Bunche’s peace efforts at Rhodes in 1949 as a model for the following attempt to assemble representatives from the parties at Cyprus. Yet he had been unaware of much of what had happened during the Rhodes negotiations. Through his talks with Israel and the discussions at the UN, Jarring may have learned that to a large degree most of the difficult issues negotiated on Rhodes were solved due to pressure applied by external actors, namely the UN Secretary General at the time, Trygve Lie, and the US.¹¹² A main difference between Bunche and Jarring was thus that Bunche had active outside support while Jarring acted on his own. It is plausible that he acknowledged that his own lack of leverage posed a major impediment to his mission, and that he was willing to risk the involvement of the superpowers in order to find a solution. Jarring opened up for discussions with the permanent powers of the Security Council, yet this did not produce changed behaviour on their part.

A Change of Venue

On 15 May, Jarring arrived at the UN headquarters in New York. By that time, Jarring had made more than forty visits to Cairo, Amman and Jerusalem without any progress to show for it. Jarring therefore decided to change the venue and talk with representatives of the adversaries on a lower level of authority. During the following months Jarring met with the UN Ambassadors from Egypt, Israel and Jordan in New York.¹¹³ The hope was supposedly that the UN Ambassadors with less authority than the Foreign Ministers could exercise more flexibility. Jarring intended to clear away some underbrush with the UN Ambassadors, before the talks could be upgraded to the foreign ministers level when they arrived in New York for the 1968 session of the UN General

¹¹⁰ UN Document S/10070, 4 January 1971 (<http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf>, 13. September 2006)

¹¹¹ Touval, 1982: p.161

¹¹² Næser, 2005: pp.106-107, see also chapters 2 and 6

¹¹³ Waldheim, 1973: p.184

Assembly in September.¹¹⁴ Hopefully the preparatory work with the UN Ambassadors could ease progress at the meetings between Jarring and the foreign Ministers.¹¹⁵

Preparatory Talks

Numerous formal and informal discussions with the UN Ambassadors were held in May and June 1968. Jarring's plan for the New York talks was to compose a program for settlement. Jarring was still approaching the conflict from the perspective of a formulator. The idea to set up a program was built on the past experiences of the Jarring mission, and he drew elements from former proposals together while bringing in new elements. Jarring thus aimed to narrow the range of the discussion further, and optimistically find a way forward by reformulating the adversaries' former suggestions and formulations. The term 'program' was chosen to allow the conflicting requests of Israel, Jordan and Egypt to fit into the same proposal. Israel had since the beginning of the mission proposed that an agenda for settlement should be worked out.¹¹⁶ The notion of an agenda implied a fixed listing of the topics to be discussed under negotiations. Egypt and Jordan on the other hand, preferred that Jarring worked out a timetable for settlement. A timetable would entail a list of when the implementation of the provisions of Resolution 242 would take place.¹¹⁷

Jarring's intention with a program for settlement was possibly to produce indirect negotiations on substantive questions. Perhaps the program could reverse the negative trend by trying to meet former demands of the adversaries. Similar to the proposal of the Jordanian revised March formula, the meetings were to be held in New York and they would commence as indirect negotiations. Jarring also hoped to acquire an Israeli statement on secure and recognized boundaries. A statement outlining Israel's deployment of armed forces after the cease-fire had been replaced by peace, would represent a step towards meeting the former Egyptian demand that Israel should declare its readiness to implement the resolution before Egypt could engage in negotiations. At the same time, Jarring aimed to meet the Israeli demand for direct negotiations by planning that the program for settlement would serve as a basis for an invitation to joint conferences at an agreed location at a later stage. Jarring saw the possibility that Jordan and Egypt could accept indirect negotiation in New York, and that they might eventually lead to face-to-face discussions.¹¹⁸

The Egyptian, Jordanian and Israeli responses to Jarring's idea of a program were negative. Jarring reported in a hand written letter to Ralph Bunche that there was "not a thing new in the talks

¹¹⁴ NA box 1815, 5 December 1968: research memorandum from Denney to the Secretary

¹¹⁵ NA box 1810, 17 May 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary; NA box 1815, 5 December 1968: research memorandum from Denney to the Secretary

¹¹⁶ Waldheim, 1973

¹¹⁷ NA box 1810, 17 May 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary

¹¹⁸ NA box 1810, 17 May 1968: cable from Rusk to USUN

[...]. Not a thing.”¹¹⁹ Jordan’s reaction to Jarring’s idea was as usual the most conciliatory of the three. The Jordanians were prepared to start joint meetings, with Jarring present, in New York if they could only have some indications on specific lines proposed by Israel as “secure and recognized boundaries”.¹²⁰ The fact that Jordan did not demand a complete and substantial position, made Israel propose to Jarring that he leave Egypt aside and focus on talks between Israel and Jordan.¹²¹ Jarring objected to this proposal because he did not think that King Hussein was strong enough to come to an agreement before Egypt. Jarring held that Israel needed to communicate something along general substantive lines with Egypt as well as to Jordan in order to get things moving with Jordan. Jarring thought that Egypt would become more flexible and, with some luck, would be willing start indirect negotiations, if only Israel would give a statement on the border issue.¹²² Jarring argued with Israel that this should not be an impossibility, since Eban had told him on several occasions that there were no major territorial problems between Israel and Egypt. Eban had also claimed that a settlement with Egypt had less inherent difficulties than one with Jordan.¹²³ However, Israel was not willing to provide Jarring with a declaration of secure and recognized boundaries, such specifics were made conditional to direct negotiations.¹²⁴

Eban’s statements raise serious questions about Israel’s sincerity in their pursuit for peace. If it was less probable that they would be able to come to an agreement with Jordan than Egypt, why leave negotiations aside to focus on talks with Jordan? It seems like Israel intended to avoid moving towards a peace agreement rather than producing a solution. Again, it appears that Israel attempted to stall the Jarring talks and feed Jarring with alternative proposals in order to keep the mission from collapsing, while avoiding compromises.

However, although Jarring was reluctant to ask for help from the superpowers he asked the UN Ambassadors from the superpowers to help convince the Israelis that an initial period of indirect discussions would be necessary, and to persuade the Arabs that direct negotiations would be needed in the end.¹²⁵ However, it was not only Jarring wanted the superpowers to get involved. The British UN Ambassador expressed his concern that the situation favoured long term Soviet gains which could ultimately threaten Western oil supplies. Britain therefore urged the Americans to pressure

¹¹⁹ NA box 1811, 5 July 1968: cable from Bell, USUN to the Secretary

¹²⁰ NA box 1812, 18 August 1968: cable from Symmes, Amman to the Secretary

¹²¹ NA box 1813, 11 October 1968: cable from the Secretary to Beirut

¹²² NA box 1813, 11 October 1968: cable from the Secretary to Beirut

¹²³ NA box 1813, 11 October 1968: cable from the Secretary to Beirut

¹²⁴ NA box 1813, 16 September 1968: cable from Rusk to Cairo; NA box 1809, 23 May 1968: cable from USUN to the Secretary; NA box 1809, 28 May 1968: cable from

¹²⁵ NA box 1810, 17 May 1968: cable from Rusk to USUN

Israel for a substantive proposal to put forward to Jarring, considering that the US was the only power that held any influence with the Israelis.¹²⁶

The US State Department was divided on which policy to pursue. There was the possibility of pressing the parties to make substantive ideas to present to Jarring. Not doing anything represented a risk of increased aggression in the area. Augmented hostility in the area would increase the risk of superpower confrontation. However, the application of pressure could potentially involve an even greater risk than leaving the situation as it was. Apart from the fact that Israel had additional priorities to peace, the internal situation in Israel made it disposed to reject making a substantive proposal even under pressure in order to avoid internal criticism and to prevent the government from falling apart. Its position of strength in the area did not necessitate an unpopular decision.¹²⁷ The US Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, noted that the internal situation in Israel was in such state that he thought outside pressure on Israel would have little effect.¹²⁸

The Americans thus decided to keep their distance, stating that the main responsibility lay with the parties themselves and that this was not the time for them to weigh in on substantive issues. If and when the parties themselves discovered areas of possible agreement, the U.S. government would be prepared to use its influence to overcome remaining obstacles.¹²⁹ The American disclaimer of responsibility was probably a consequence of the immobility of the Johnson administration. The Middle East was not the real priority in the US. It could not sustain an initiative in the Middle East without facing severe criticism, a situation which it could not endure.¹³⁰

Jarring's talks with the ambassadors to the UN did not bring him any closer to breaking the deadlock between the adversaries on the interpretation of the Security Council Resolution and the manner in which it should be implemented. In a personal conversation with a diplomatic colleague in Moscow, Jarring admitted that his task was even more difficult than he had imagined, and implied that the problem stemmed chiefly from the political situations in Cairo and Tel Aviv.¹³¹ The unstable Israeli coalition government gained more by allowing time to pass rather than settling the conflict through unpopular compromises. The maintenance of the status quo entailed no problem for Israel, while the indulgence in concessions would be risky under the rebellious atmosphere in Cairo.

Another reason for the difficulties at the UN was that after a while the representatives Jarring dealt with there after a while revealed that they had no authority to make decisions. Each of them

¹²⁶ NA box 1810, 25 June 1968: cable from Katzenbach, DeptSt to Jidda

¹²⁷ See chapter 4: pp.68-71

¹²⁸ NA box 1810, 25 June 1968: cable from Katzenbach, DeptSt to Jidda ; NA box 1813, 3 September 1968: research memorandum by Thomas L Hughes, DeptSt

¹²⁹ NA box 1810, 17 May 1968: cable from Rusk to USUN

¹³⁰ See chapter 4: pp.79-80

¹³¹ NA box 1811, 12 July 1968: cable from Rusk to USUN

“kept having to run back to his government for instructions”, which made the line of communication between Jarring and the adversaries long and inflexible.¹³² In other words, the level of authority had not changed in reality. The Israeli UN Ambassador, Yosef Tekoah explained to the American UN ambassador Arthur Goldberg that his instructions were to continue communicating with Jarring in the same manner as foreign minister Eban had. Tekoah explained that he interpreted this as meaning that he was not entitled to go into any substantive matter without further instructions from his government.¹³³ Moreover, the UN ambassadors had other tasks in addition to dealing with the Jarring mission which took time and diverted their attention from the peace talks. Jarring sought superpower assistance directly this time, but the US government decided not to interfere at this point. The question remains as to whether the Americans did not trust the Jarring mission enough to place their bets on him, or if they simply did not want to interfere, thus giving way to the Israeli demands and avoiding the risk of domestic criticism.

General Assembly Meeting

There had been no progress during the New York talks either. Every attempt made by the Jarring mission had fallen through without any viable results to show for. Jarring decided to resume contacts with the governments in the Middle East instead of communicating indirectly with the regimes through their UN ambassadors. Once again Jarring travelled between the capitals of the Middle East in August and September preparing for the meeting at the General Assembly. However, the summer of 1968 was one of increasing tension in the Middle East. The peace diplomacy exacerbated the rising tension between the Jordanian authorities and the Palestinian guerrillas.¹³⁴ The Palestinians felt their national aspirations increasingly abandoned by Jordan and Egypt because the peace effort was based on a resolution ignoring the Palestinians. The presence of the Palestinian militia in Amman became more visible, and the number of terrorist attacks against Israel increased.¹³⁵ Military clashes between Israel and Egypt occurred on and off from the end of the Six-Day War, yet these too became more frequent. An artillery duel across the Suez Canal in September 1968 brought Israel and Egypt closer to the imminent War of Attrition.¹³⁶ The discussions under Jarring took place in a less than favourable situation. No new elements appeared in the Jarring talks over the summer, and Jarring returned to New York. Discouraged,

¹³² NA box 1811, 19 July 1968: cable from Bergus, Cairo to the Secretary; NA box 1810, 17 May 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary

¹³³ NA box 1810, 17 May 1968: cable from Goldberg, USUN to the Secretary

¹³⁴ See chapter 4: pp.74-77

¹³⁵ Robins, Philip: *A History of Jordan*, 2004: p.128

¹³⁶ See chapter 4: pp.77-78

Jarring declared the upcoming debate in connection with the General Assembly meeting to be his last attempt.¹³⁷

The foreign ministers of Israel, Jordan and Egypt arrived in New York at the end of September to attend the 1968 General Assembly session. Jarring held frequent meetings with them individually, first of an informal nature, but when the foreign ministers gave their speeches in the general debate of the General Assembly, the discussions assumed a more formal character.

Shortly before the foreign ministers arrived in New York City, American and British officials suggested to Jarring that he should develop a method to engage the parties in substantive exchanges in New York and that he should be more active in introducing his own ideas. The British thought Jarring needed to be more willing to play the role of an active mediator and pose his own suggestions to the parties to the conflict in order to bridge the vast gap existing between them.¹³⁸ The US Secretary of State, Dean Rusk joined in the British analysis and observed that Jarring and the Secretary General, U Thant, were not bold enough in pressing for both substantive and procedural questions. The two powers suggested that Jarring press forward a proposal for a joint meeting between the parties without any wavering.¹³⁹ This urging of Jarring to play a more active role is reminiscent of the US effort to coerce Jarring during his last phase. The State Department obviously felt throughout the Jarring mission that he acted too slow and cautiously. However, Jarring was unwilling to follow the advice from the US and the UK. He did not believe the procedure suggested by them would work. An invitation to meetings would bring to mind the Rhodes procedure, already thoroughly discussed by the parties.¹⁴⁰ Jarring thought the time was not right for direct meetings and decided to continue with indirect communications in New York.¹⁴¹

It is unlikely that American officials thought Jarring could achieve much when they foresaw the fact that their own pressure may be rejected by Israel at this point. Jarring did not possess the persuasive sources of leverage that the superpowers could use to encourage or pressure the adversaries to make concessions. What did they think Jarring could accomplish by pressing the parties for substance when they themselves thought that the situation in the Middle East was too unstable for their own involvement to be effective? Was the stalemate a welcome excuse for the US to sit on the fence? And is it possible that the US would have provided active support for Jarring had he played by their rules? The Americans were not pleased by Jarring's performance, and may simply

¹³⁷ Waldheim, 1973: p.185; UN Document S/10070, 4 January 1971 (<http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf>, 13 September 2006)

¹³⁸ NA box 1812, 13 September 1968: cable from Rusk to USUN and London

¹³⁹ NA box 1810, 25 June 1968: cable from Katzenbach, DeptSt to Jidda

¹⁴⁰ Ralph Bunche served as UN undersecretary for Special Political Affairs from 1955 to 1967, and eventually rose to the position of Undersecretary General in 1968, working closely with Jarring and the Secretary General.

¹⁴¹ NA box 1813, 20 September 1968: cable from the Secretary to Jidda

have believed that Jarring would not deliver. The US Under Secretary of State, Eugene W. Rostow noted flatly: “At Jarring’s present pace, indirect exchanges through him would take until 1980, at least.”¹⁴² The US and Britain critiqued Jarring’s approach, but they were not themselves willing to lift a finger in order to promote progress. The US was not willing to risk Israel’s fury, and the implications that it would have for the domestic support for the Democrats when presidential elections were approaching.

However, a change was about to occur in the positions of Israel and the US. On 8 October 1968 the Israeli foreign minister gave his speech in the general debate, and declared Israel’s readiness to exchange ideas and clarifications on nine points through ambassador Jarring.¹⁴³ The nine-point peace plan, as it was called, as presented according to Abba Eban:

the most moderate possible formulation to Israel’s position on 1) the establishment of peace; 2) secure and recognized boundaries; 3) security arrangements; 4) the open frontier; 5) navigation; 6) refugees; 7) Jerusalem; 8) acknowledgement and recognition of sovereignty, integrity and right to national life; and 9) regional cooperation.¹⁴⁴

Eban’s statement was regarded a step forward from the earlier staunch Israeli insistence on prior negotiations by agreeing to engage in discussions over issues of substance with Jarring.

Jarring’s threat to leave unless there was any progress during the General Assembly meetings, may have triggered this Israeli concession. If the Jarring mission came to an end when the Israeli position appeared to be the least forthcoming, Israel would be left in an unenviable position in world opinion. Afraid to be left with the Black Mark for the failure of the Jarring mission, Israel was reluctant to place itself in a position where the superpowers could exert pressure to force Israel to return the occupied areas. Satisfied by the outcome of his speech, Eban also observed that “for at least a year after the nine-point peace proposal, Israel was immune from charges in the international press about her obduracy and intransigence. Hundreds of newspapers across the world told the Arab states that the ball was in their court.”¹⁴⁵

The concession was also partially a result of an American incentive presented to Israel. The day after Eban’s speech, President Johnson publicly announced his decision to make Phantom jet fighters available to Israel. In January 1968, Johnson had promised Prime Minister Eshkol to provide American Phantom jet fighters for Israel, but he had left the terms, timing and conditions unspecified. The delay of deliverance may have been a result of the fact that many US officials felt that a supply of weapons to Israel should be linked to some kind of Israeli concessions. Within the

¹⁴² NA box 1811, 25 July 1968: Memorandum from Rostow to Davies, NEA

¹⁴³ NA box 1813, 10 October 1968: cable from Tel Aviv to the Secretary, Touval, 1982: p.145

¹⁴⁴ Eban, 1977: p.456

¹⁴⁵ Eban, 1977: p.457

bureaucracy, some officials wanted to reverse Israel's growing appetite for territory and agree to the principle of total withdrawal in return for the Phantom's.¹⁴⁶ Although not an agreement to withdrawal, Eban's statement provided an impetus to deliver. Eban himself pointed to this linkage in his memoirs, in which he states that a purpose of the nine-point plan was to comply with Johnson's terms in January to supply of the Phantom Jet Fighters. The airplanes may therefore have been a reward for the forthcoming statement to Jarring.

However, it had positive implications for the US government too. It may have been an act to win recognition from the pro-Israeli public towards the very end of Johnson's presidency and thus linked to the presidential election campaign. Jarring's threat to leave may also have caused the US to provide Israel with such an incentive. The US apparently did not wish to be left with the baton. Jarring therefore had used one of his few sources of leverage, namely the threat to withdraw, and it did in fact influence the positions of Israel and the US to a certain degree.

Although it was seen as a great concession, the nine points listed in the speech were essentially a materialization of the idea of a peace agenda, lining up issues to be discussed in the course of future negotiations. The statement contained neither an acceptance of Resolution 242 nor a commitment to implement it, and as a result it was not acceptable to the Arabs. The reply from the Egyptian foreign minister Riad to Eban's speech on 8 October was: "I'm not fond of points, really; I'm fond of actions."¹⁴⁷ The only new thing in Eban's speech, according to Riad, was the statement that the Israelis were ready to talk with Ambassador Jarring on some – but not all – matters.¹⁴⁸ This was an unforthcoming answer to the Israeli concession. The Egyptian response in fact represented a real threat to the Jarring mission, since Jarring had declared it to be his last try.¹⁴⁹

The concrete results of the deliberations at the General Assembly were written communications to Jarring on the positions of Israel and Egypt. In the written statements, Israel and Egypt essentially demonstrated that they did not buy Jarring's idea for a program for settlement. Israel regarded Resolution 242 a statement of principles in light of which the parties should negotiate a peace treaty. Egypt on the other hand, considered the resolution as a plan for resolving the Middle East dispute that should be implemented by the parties according to modalities established by the Special Representative.¹⁵⁰ Thus, the deadlock continued and the reasons for the standstill remained largely unchanged. In simple terms, the Israelis would not seriously discuss settlement without advance assurances of a final, formalized peace with open borders, while the Arabs would not sit

¹⁴⁶ Quandt, 1993: p.57; Touval, 1982: p.149

¹⁴⁷ UNA S-0861-5-18, 10 October 1968: notes on press conference by Foreign Minister of United Arab Republic [Egypt]

¹⁴⁸ UNA S-0861-5-18, 10 October 1968: notes on press conference by Foreign Minister of United Arab Republic [Egypt]

¹⁴⁹ Touval, 1982: p.145

¹⁵⁰ Reich, 1972: p.14; Waldheim, 1973: p.185; UN Document S/10070, 4 January 1971 (<http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf>, 13. September 2006)

down to negotiations until they were positive that following these negotiations, Israel would indeed withdraw from almost all of the ground they gained in 1967. However, Egypt and Jordan agreed to minor alterations both ways in the interest of a more viable border line.¹⁵¹

The exchanges that took place during the General Assembly session meetings were affected by the rumours and press leaks that surrounded them. As a result of this “each side tried [to] portray itself as the apostle of peace and its opponent as the sole cause of obstruction, meanwhile trading stilted notes for which Mr. Jarring served as a ‘mailbox’.”¹⁵²

The Egyptian and Jordanian foreign ministers left the talks and departed for their homes on 7 November, underlining their disbelief in the Jarring mission. The Israeli foreign minister left four days later. All three however, took pains to keep the door open to “further cooperation” with the UN peace mission at another time and place. The mission survived what was confidently declared in advance to be its final attempt.¹⁵³ Although no longer a source of immediate hope, the mission had paradoxically acquired a life of its own. Neither party, including Jarring himself, who was threatening to leave in September, wished to be the one to end it.

Jarring stayed in New York to review the mission and its possibilities in the future. Undersecretary General Ralph Bunche noted Jarring’s frustration over the situation in early November: “Gunnar Jarring comes in to see me three or four times every day. He is a very taciturn man but obviously has the need to unburden himself to someone.”¹⁵⁴ Jarring meant that the key missing ingredient was a clear Israeli statement of willingness to implement Resolution 242. As the victor of the war and as the occupant of Arab land, Israel had all the bargaining cards in hand. It was, therefore, Israel who that had to clarify to what degree it was willing to rectify of the old armistice lines in order to provide its security. The Egyptians and the Jordanians were left in no position to indicate what territories they were prepared to yield in exchange for peace.¹⁵⁵

On 9 December 1968 Jarring left New York to resume his position as ambassador to Moscow. He planned to return to the Middle East in the middle of January 1969 to start another round of talks. However, he did not return to the mission as soon as anticipated. There was a change of administration in the US in January 1969. The new administration had to decide whether to change the low-profile policy that had characterized the Johnson years.¹⁵⁶ Jarring believed a period of absence would enable the new President of the US, Richard M. Nixon to adopt a new policy for

¹⁵¹ NA box 1815, 5 December 1968: research memorandum from Denney, INR to the Secretary

¹⁵² NA box 1815, 5 December 1968: research memorandum from Denney, INR to the Secretary

¹⁵³ NA box 1815, 5 December 1968: research memorandum from Denney, INR to the Secretary

¹⁵⁴ Urquhart, 1993: p.418

¹⁵⁵ NA box 1814, 21 October 1968: cable from USUN to the Secretary

¹⁵⁶ Kissinger, 1979: p.350

the United States which would help Jarring to solve the problem in the Middle East.¹⁵⁷ Jarring noted that the Arabs also awaited a possible change of situation under the new US administration, and it was impossible to talk to Egypt and Jordan before the American position had become clear.¹⁵⁸ In addition, the US, the Soviet Union, Britain and France had recently started discussions on the Middle East question and Jordan and Egypt were probably also pondering the outcome of these before they were willing to continue working with Jarring. The two countries were hoping that the Four Power discussions would bring about pressure on the Israelis.¹⁵⁹

An End to the First Phase

Although he must have had little hope of any progress in this situation, Jarring returned to the Middle East in February 1969. He had prepared a series of questions with which to address Israel, Egypt and Jordan, asking them to state their positions on each provision of Resolution 242. Some provisions would impose obligations on all states concerned, some on one side, and some on the other. However, Jarring meant that the resolution had to be treated as a package deal, meaning that no element could be implemented isolated from the others.¹⁶⁰ The three questionnaires were virtually identical, except for questions regarding only one or two of the adversaries, such as a question on the subject of freedom of navigation which concerned only Israel and Egypt. The three parties were presented with the lists of questions during the first half of March. After receiving answers from the parties, the plan was for Jarring to define the points on which there was agreement and on which there was disagreement. Following this, he planned to invite the foreign ministers to a neutral place for discussions. Jarring said that if, after examining the answers, he concluded that the differences between the parties were too wide to permit effective action, he would return to Moscow and would remain available to the parties for whatever they desired.¹⁶¹ This must be considered a threat; if the parties made no efforts to compromise, Jarring would leave the Middle East and resume his work in Moscow. He probably hoped that the risk of ending the Jarring talks would help motivate the adversaries to yield at least on some points.

The different answers conveyed to Jarring a couple of weeks later were, however, replicas of the earlier stated positions. In fact, Egypt and Jordan had coordinated their answers and the Jordanian position had been pulled towards a more irreconcilable stance. Apparently feeling that this was inconsistent with the former Jordanian position, Foreign Minister Rifai pre-emptively excused

¹⁵⁷ NA box 1815, 6 December 1968: cable from Bergus, Cairo to the Secretary

¹⁵⁸ NA box 1817, 24 January 1969: cable from Rogers to USUN

¹⁵⁹ See chapter 4: pp.82-85

¹⁶⁰ NA box 1819, 11 March 1969: cable from Rogers to Paris, London, Moscow, Jidda, Beirut

¹⁶¹ NA box 1818, 22 February 1969: cable from Rogers to Paris; NA box 1819, 11 March 1969: cable from Rogers to Paris, London, Moscow, Jidda, Beirut; Touval, 1982: p.153

the Jordanian answer upon delivering it to Jarring. He stressed to Jarring that at this stage they considered it essential to remain accurate and cautious, and not give away negotiating advantages. Therefore, the responses would not be as forthright as they normally were when made orally to Jarring.¹⁶² The Israeli reply reflected the difficult deliberations to produce a response. The Israeli government was in a phase of transition caused by the death of the Israeli Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol.¹⁶³ Golda Meir took over this position on 17 March 1969. There was a widespread apprehension in the Cabinet of the Four-Power proceedings and under the current circumstances, the Cabinet insisted on spelling out the familiar Israeli positions.

There was no obvious reason for Jarring to believe that a formal questionnaire would elicit new concessions from the parties. It is conceivable that he perceived this to be the only practical step he could take at this juncture, and that he assumed that the parties would repeat their previous positions, thereby giving him an excuse to shelve the mission without bearing the responsibility for the suspension himself. Jarring probably also concluded that he should await the result of recently initiated Four Power talks on the Middle East question before making any substantial moves. It is plausible that he hoped a return to Moscow would stimulate the superpowers to reach an agreement on how to support the Jarring mission in a productive manner.¹⁶⁴ On April 5, three days after he received the last reply, Jarring returned to his position as Swedish Ambassador to Moscow.

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Through the first phase of the Jarring mission some development in the Special Representative's role can be observed. At the end Jarring no longer represented a mere a line of communication between the parties. By putting forward proposals of his own, he tried to build on his previous experience in order to bring the adversaries closer together and to dig deeper into the problem and hopefully break the barrier of procedure. He thus became more than a mere communicator, or mailbox, and assumed the role of a formulator. This would seem to be a prelude for the later development of Jarring's role which will be described in chapter 5. Even so, in the first phase of his mission Jarring did not formulate any proposals on questions of substance, he simply attempted to facilitate a meeting between the parties to the conflict by formulating suggestions concerning procedure.

Between November 1967 and April 1969 Jarring was a solitary traveller. He shuttled between the representatives of Jordan, Egypt and Israel without the company of any actors of leverage. The Soviet Union was always in the background, rebuilding Egypt, but without much power to pressure

¹⁶² NA box 1819, 20 March 1969: cable from Symmes, Amman to the Secretary

¹⁶³ See chapter 4: pp.68-71

¹⁶⁴ NA box 1819, 7 March 1969: cable from Rogers to Paris; Touval, 1982: p. 153

Israel into acceding to Arabs demands. The only really potent option was the threat of superpower confrontation, which it was not willing to risk. Through the first phase of the Jarring mission, the US increasingly attempted to avoid getting involved in Middle East diplomacy. Moreover, American support for Israel grew during this period of one and a half years. If it was ever considered, it would have been very difficult for the US to defend domestically the controversial act of pressuring Israel to yield the territories occupied in the Six-Day War. Jarring was therefore left largely on his own to deal with the Middle East diplomacy.

The asymmetric relations of power between Israel on the one hand and Egypt and Jordan on the other, created a situation where Egypt and Jordan had more to lose than Israel. In order to make progress the Special Representative needed to demonstrate to Israel that a solution was more attractive than continued conflict. Jarring's weak position and the lack of assistance by potentially influential actors curtailed the range of strategies Jarring could choose from. Jarring could not assume the role of a manipulator, and had no inherent means of engaging actively in mediation in order to change the facts of the conflict.

However, the question remains whether Jarring wished to be provided with levers of power or if he wished to act as a solitary intermediary. As we have seen in chapter 3, although Jarring cautiously invited the superpowers to help persuade Israel, Egypt and Jordan into accepting his proposals, Jarring was extremely careful not to include outside actors intimately in the talks. In this thesis it is argued that within his given room to manoeuvre, Jarring preferred to act alone. His strategy was to make progress by facilitating trust between the adversaries. Involving the superpowers in the talks could undermine Jarring's credibility with the participants to the talks. Moreover, it would most likely diminish his power to influence the formulation of a potential settlement. Jarring preferred no solution to running the risk of producing a solution he found unjust.

Conditions in Flux

The sixteen months that passed between April 1969 and August 1970 separated the two active phases of the Jarring mission. Gunnar Jarring and his crew were not engaged in the region during these months. However important developments occurred during this intermission and the months flanking it. In the Middle East a new war had broken out between Israel and Egypt. The Jordanian regime on its side struggled for power against groups of militant Palestinian Arabs attaining ever more influence in Jordan. Both Israel and Egypt in addition saw the death of their state leaders. Internationally, four permanent powers of the UN Security Council commenced talks concerning the conduct of the Jarring mission. These talks, however, faded before the second phase of the Jarring mission began. Instead, a unilateral American peace initiative brought the US to become the only superpower actively involved in the Middle East diplomacy. The coming of new administration in the US also brought implications for the American handling of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This chapter will explore how these national, regional and international events altered the setting for the second phase of the Jarring mission.

Regional Changes

In March 1969, the War of Attrition erupted out across the Suez Canal and brought tension in the Middle East to a new peak. The renewed state of war was one reason for the temporary suspension of the Jarring mission. By late September 1970, both the Egyptian and the Israeli heads of state had died and made way for new regimes in the two countries. In Israel, the new government under Golda Meir represented a hard-line faction of the Israeli Labour party. In Egypt, Anwar al-Sadat's regime eventually developed a more conciliatory line towards Israel.¹ Alongside these developments the domestic problems grew in Jordan, leading the country ever closer to the civil war that erupted in September 1970. The high tension and the changes linked to

¹ One should not overstate the importance of the personal attributes of the heads of state, because leaders do not act independently of the global, regional and domestic structures which determine their environment. However, the changes in leadership in Israel and Egypt did represent a certain change in the positions of the two countries toward the peace process, and are therefore discussed. The personality traits may have been more decisive in Egypt than in Israel because of the relatively low political institutionalization, and resultantly that foreign policy was the domain of the president and his close associates. Dessouki, Ali E. Hillal, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt" in Korany, Baghat and Dessouki, Ali E. Hillal (eds.): *The Foreign Policy of the Arab States. The Challenge of Change*, 1991: pp.157; 168

these national and regional events naturally affected the attitudes and attentions of the adversaries towards Jarring's peace efforts.

From Eshkol to Meir

On 26 February 1969, Levi Eshkol died from cancer in Jerusalem.² In March that same year, Golda Meir was brought out of retirement to succeed Levi Eshkol as Prime Minister.³ Superficially, the change took place only at the top, since the two leaders adhered to the same political party, Mapai.⁴ They thus had many corresponding political views, but there were also obvious differences.⁵ "She was a fighter; he was a man of compromise. She was dogmatic and domineering; he was open minded and often hesitant. She was intransigent; he was flexible."⁶ Apart from these differences in personalities, the two leaders also saw certain political issues from different points of view. In the realm of foreign policy, Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir belonged to different factions of the party. The majority of the Mapai were dovish, and Eshkol was a representative of this typical moderate faction of the party. Golda Meir, on the other hand, was associated with the hawkish faction of Mapai.⁷ Together with a volatile regional situation, the repeatedly changed composition of the Israeli coalition government, the change of Prime Minister in Israel carried implications for the Israeli policy toward the Arab states, the peace process, and in extension the Jarring mission.

Following the Six-Day War, there was no domestic consensus in Israel as to what policies to pursue towards the Arabs and with regard to the future of the occupied areas.⁸ As time passed, public opinion polarized further on these issues. This division cut right across the existing party lines, and left the coalition governments without a workable consensus. Both Eshkol and Meir felt compelled to avoid decisions in order to preserve the unity of their base of power in the government.⁹

Two ideological opposite poles emerged: On the one side, we find the Greater Israel movement, which advocated the incorporation of the occupied territories into Israel. On the other

² Eban, 1977: pp.461-462; Shlaim, 2001: pp.283-289

³ Golda Meir had first resigned from the Cabinet in 1965, citing illness and exhaustion from her years of service. However, she was soon called back into service. She served as Secretary General of the newly-created Alignment for eight months and retired again on 1 August 1968. Golda Meir was almost 71 years old when she was brought out of retirement for the second time when she became Israel's Prime Minister in 1969. She would serve as Prime Minister until 1974.

⁴ Israel's major labour party, Mapai (Land of Israel Worker's Party), was established in 1930 as a Zionist-socialist party and served as the dominant political party in the pre-state and early years of statehood. The party held a majority and continued to dominate the Israeli government until 1977 under various names and alliances. Mapai kept control over the realm of foreign and defence policy, domestic policies were distributed to its coalition partners.

⁵ Rafael, 1981: p.202; Shlaim, 2001: p.285

⁶ Shlaim, 2001: p.285

⁷ The terms 'dove' and 'hawk' replaced the terms 'moderate' and 'activist' after 1967. Shlaim, 2001: p.286

⁸ See also chapter 2: pp.26-28

⁹ Brecher, Michael: *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy*, 1974: pp.459-464; Shlaim, Avi and Yaniv, Avner: "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy in Israel" in *International Affairs*, vol.56, no 2, 1980: p.248

side, there was the peace movement, which advocated the return of most of the territories and a policy designed to lead to accommodation and coexistence with the Arabs. Between these opposing poles existed less polarized positions. The full spectre of positions was, to a varying degree, represented in the Knesset.¹⁰ One could say that Eshkol was more inclined towards the peace movement while Meir leaned towards the Greater Israel movement. As opposed to Golda Meir, Levi Eshkol saw the Arabs not just as an enemy, but as a people. He believed that it was possible for Israel to coexist with its Arab neighbours, and considered dialogue and diplomacy valuable in order to reach a viable settlement between Israel and its neighbours. Eshkol thought that the only way to peace with the Arab states was through direct negotiations.¹¹ Golda Meir, on the other hand, did not think Israel could coexist peacefully with the Arabs. She viewed the Arabs as fundamentally hostile and saw the need to deal with them from a position of strength. Meir believed that the exposed location of the country doomed Israel “forever to live by the sword.”¹²

However, the discernible changes in policy between Eshkol’s and Meir’s governments did not appear over night, and were not merely a result of the leader’s personal preferences. When Eshkol came to power in 1963 the moderate forces held considerable influence in the Israeli government. With gradual changes in the composition of the national unity government, Eshkol’s room for flexibility in policymaking gradually decreased. Before the Six-Day War, Eshkol saw the purpose of a potential war to be defensive and limited. He thought that Israel could realize its national aims within the borders that already existed. However, new factions in the government did not share Eshkol’s moderation in dealing with the neighbouring Arab states, and Eshkol was accused of pursuing a policy of appeasement towards the Arabs that represented a deviation from traditional Israeli policies. Hardliners held that this development was dangerous for Israel’s security.¹³ This accusation may have been one reason for why precisely the already retired Golda Meir, known as a hardliner, was chosen to succeed him. One may question, however, if Eshkol’s position was an actual deviation from traditional Israeli policy or if this was a charge constructed by the factions opposing the policy pursued by him. This may well have been the case. On the eve of the 1967 War the goals of the Israeli government had become the destruction of enemy forces as well as an expansion of the Israeli territories.¹⁴ In January 1968 Eshkol’s party, now a part of the Labour Alignment, merged with Rafi. Rafi had a more hawkish position on the policy towards the Arabs

¹⁰ Brecher, 1974: pp.459-464; Shlaim, 2001: p.286; Yaniv, Avner & Pascal, Fabian: “Doves, Hawks, and other Birds of Feather: The Distribution of Israeli Parliamentary Opinion on the Future of the Occupied Territories, 1967-1977” in *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol.10, No.2, 1980: pp.253-254; 261

¹¹ Shlaim, 2001: pp.219-220

¹² Shlaim, 2001: pp.286,323

¹³ Rabin, 1979: p.135-136; Rafael, 1981: p.202; Shlaim, 2001: pp.219-262; Thant, 1978: p319

¹⁴ Shlaim, 2001: pp.243, 251

than the former Labour Alignment. This strengthened the activist wing of the Alignment which further immobilised Israeli foreign policy. Soon after the end of the war, Eshkol announced that Israel would not hand over any of the occupied territory until the Arabs agreed to negotiate a formal peace treaty directly with Israel, incorporating secure and recognized boundaries. This formula served as the basis for Israeli diplomacy for the rest of the Jarring mission.¹⁵

When Golda Meir assumed office in March 1969, the hawkish branch was thus dominant in the Israeli government, and even more so when the right wing increased its power in the national election in October the same year. Although the majority of Mapai remained dovish also under Golda Meir, the hawks set the tone in the new national unity government. Firstly, because Golda Meir had a particularly strong position within the party and could trump certain matters of importance to her. Secondly, the moderate Mapai ministers refrained from forming a union with other moderate ministers in the coalition government, while the smaller number of hawkish Mapai ministers nurtured cooperation with the ministers from the right-wing party Gahal. The connection with Gahal provided the Mapai hawks with a majority on many of the issues that were important to them. These were often issues related to foreign policy, security and the occupied territories. As a result the hawks were able to resist proposals for political initiatives to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict.¹⁶ Golda Meir effectively avoided a political crisis by avoiding a decision. She thereby placed her weight behind the policy of preserving the status quo with the Arabs.¹⁷

When Golda Meir came to power she adopted “the two principles that formed the bedrock of Israeli policy after 1967: No return to the pre-war borders and no withdrawal without direct negotiations and peace treaties with the Arab states.”¹⁸ Unless Egypt and Jordan were willing to make peace on Israel’s terms, implying a full contractual peace without full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, Israel would continue to consolidate its position along the cease-fire lines. After the Six-Day War Golda Meir considered the question of the borders to be crucial to Israel’s security, and rejected the claim that the refusal to return the occupied territories was evidence of expansionism. In any issue related to Israel’s security, Meir was uncompromising. In fact, ‘intransigent’ was said to be her middle name. “Under Meir’s leadership, Israel’s policy to the conflict with the Arab states consisted essentially of military activism and diplomatic immobility. “‘Intransigent’ was not only her middle name. It was also the hallmark of Israel’s policy in the conflict with the Arab world during the five years of her premiership.”¹⁹ The Israeli position towards

¹⁵ Rafael, 1981: p.202; Shlaim & Yaniv: 1980: p.242; Shlaim, 2001: p.262

¹⁶ Brecher, 1974: pp.464-468; Shlaim, 2001: pp.186-187

¹⁷ Rafael, 1981: p.215; Shlaim & Yaniv, 1980: p.251; Shlaim, 2001: pp.284-285

¹⁸ Shlaim, 2001:p.285

¹⁹ Shlaim, 2001: pp.288-289

peace with Egypt and Jordan grew harder under Golda Meir. As we shall see in chapter 5, this caused a strain in the relationship between Jarring and the Israeli representatives.

From Nasser to Sadat

During the early fall of 1970, the Jarring mission was resumed after 16 months of inactivity. Coinciding with Jarring's return to the Middle East was the death of the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser on 28 September 1970. The death of Nasser and the following uncertainty of his succession diverted attention away from the resumption of the Jarring mission. Nasser's Vice-President Muhammad Anwar al-Sadat's assumption of power pointed towards a comparatively more conciliatory Egyptian posture towards Israel, but this was probably not apparent to the participants in the Jarring talks.

Nasser and Sadat represented two different directions in the foreign policy of Egypt. When Nasser came to power in 1954, he embarked on a new policy based on pan-Arab nationalism, anti-imperialism and alleged neutralism in the Cold War.²⁰ Nasser declared that the aim of his government was to lead all Arabs to becoming one nation. He planned to secure the Middle East from outside aggression through an Arab collective security pact under his leadership.²¹ The wish for total Arab independence entailed a desire to be freed from Western influence. Nasser therefore promoted neutralism in the superpower rivalry. He resisted all American enticement directed at persuading the leading Arab nation to join the security pact connected to the West, the Baghdad Pact.²² Nasser saw the pact as new imperialism and as a source of division in the Arab world. Israel was seen as an extension of the Western influence in the area and Nasser thus objected to its existence.²³

Sadat's tenure in power would eventually bring about a change of Egyptian foreign policies, and most importantly in this connection is a more conciliatory line towards Israel. Egypt changed alliances at the regional level between 1971 and 1973, building closer ties to pro-Western states, especially Saudi Arabia. Further, Sadat visited Jerusalem in 1977. However, following this event Egypt was expelled from all Arab and Islamic councils. Globally, Sadat ended up shifting the Egyptian focus away from the Soviet Union and towards the United States.²⁴ The change in foreign

²⁰ Hahn, 1991: pp.181-184; Rubinstein, 1977: pp.3-4; Sayigh & Shlaim, 2003: p.45

²¹ Hahn, 1991: p.184

²² From mid-1954 to mid-1956, the US government tried to prevent Soviet penetration in the Middle East by establishing a northern tier security pact. To elicit Egyptian cooperation with these plans, they offered Nasser economic and military assistance in 1954 and 1955. Nasser accepted some of it and rejected some of it, but refused to modify his behaviour in exchange for it. This would violate his understanding of Egyptian independence. Hahn, 1991: pp.183-207

²³ Goldschmidt, 2004: p.153; Hahn, 1991: p.181; Sayigh & Shlaim, 2003: pp.28-29, 51-52

²⁴ Dessouki, 1991: p.156; Goldschmidt, 2004: p.156; Shlaim, 2001: p.299;
<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/kbank/profiles/sadat> (22 November 2006).

policy did not, however, come abruptly with the ascendancy of Sadat to the presidency. A process of alteration had already commenced under Nasser, and Sadat's new line would not be pronounced until after the period covered in this thesis.

Nasser's original message struck a profound chord amongst Arabs and Moslems. Many Arabs admired Nasser as a champion of Arab interests, a reputation he cultivated. Within a few years of becoming president, Nasser rode on a wave of popularity in the Arab world. Under Nasser, Egypt was intensely involved in the Middle East region, which propelled Egypt to its position as a regional leader. A leading Lebanese opposition figure, Nadim al-Jisr said that Nasser "became, to all Arabs and Moslems, an object of worship next to God."²⁵ However, the Six-Day War marked a turning point for Egypt's position, and forced a change upon Nasser's foreign policy.

The June War seemed to have a moderating impact on Nasser, and from 1967, Egypt gradually abandoned its radical stand in the region. The immediate reason for this was that its devastated economy forced Egypt to seek financial help from oil-rich Arab countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, who agreed to subsidize the economies of both Egypt and Jordan to compensate for the losses of income until "the effects of the aggression are eliminated".²⁶ Before the war, Nasser had directed his radical policies towards these pro-western, but wealthy countries, the same states he now was made dependant on.²⁷ The dependency on pro-western states carried implications for Nasser's approach towards Israel. A radical stance might lead them to withdraw their economical support for Egypt. At the same time, the loss of military potential during the 1967-War created a radically increased Egyptian need for security, Egypt could now easily be invaded by Israeli troops. This led Nasser to give up his former ideal of neutrality and essentially turn to the Soviet Union. The Cold War made it difficult for Egypt to remain truly unaffected by the Superpower rivalry. Egypt, like most other countries, experienced that it was difficult to achieve its goals without the support of one of the superpowers, especially in terms of military and economical aid. Because of his dependence on the pro-western states, Nasser continued to pay lip-service to neutralism, while he in fact exclusively turned towards the Soviet Union.²⁸

Nasser had maintained a hard line towards Israel during most of his time in power. However, even though he refused to negotiate directly with Israel, Nasser responded relatively favourably to Jarring's effort to create peace between Israel and the Arab states following the Six-Day War. Towards the end of his life, Nasser seems to have concluded that the Arab-Israeli conflict could not

²⁵ Sayigh & Shlaim, 2003: pp. 29,85

²⁶ Goldschmidt, 2004, p.150; Mutawi, 1987: pp.173-177; Rubinstein, 1977: p.41; Sayigh and Shlaim, 1996: pp.35, 104

²⁷ Goldschmidt, 2004, p.150; Mutawi, 1987: pp.173-177; Rubinstein, 1977: p.41; Sayigh and Shlaim, 1996: pp.35, 104

²⁸ Sayigh & Shlaim, 2003: pp. 35, 45-47

be solved by military means. The radical aspects of Nasser's regime were thus already in the process of being modified when Sadat succeeded him.²⁹

Although signalling a change in Egyptian policy at the outset of his eleven years as Egypt's president, Sadat's policies resembled to a large degree those of his predecessor. Before Sadat assumed uncontested control of Egypt, the country's leadership was of a more collective character. Sadat therefore moved very cautiously at first and pledged to continue Nasser's policies.³⁰ In 1971, Sadat even moved further than Nasser towards the Soviet Union by signing the Soviet-Egyptian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation.³¹ Sadat's conciliatory line is said to have begun only after his so called Corrective Revolution in May 1971, which took place after Jarring left the Middle East.³² Thus one can assume that the Jarring mission, which overlapped with the last years of Nasser's rule and the first six months of Sadat's presidency, was not seriously influenced by the indications of an altered Egyptian foreign policy.

Although Sadat promised that he would follow Nasser's policies, one can argue that the tendencies towards a more conciliatory line with Israel were already visible at the end of the Jarring mission. Sadat's positive answer to Jarring's peace proposal of 8 February 1971, to which we shall return in chapter 5, and his public proposal of 4 February 1971 to reopen the Suez Canal in return for a partial withdrawal of the Israeli troops on the eastern bank of the canal as a first step to implement Resolution 242, can be said to represent a more conciliatory line than Nasser's.³³ As we shall see, although neither of the proposals were carried out, they can be said to demonstrate Sadat's shift of emphasis from the desire for an overall settlement with Israel to the pursuit of an interim agreement.³⁴

In conclusion, the policies of Nasser and Sadat were broadly similar at the time of the Jarring mission. The two men had comparable backgrounds and had struggled for largely the same goals. They had fought together with the Free Officers to topple the corrupt Egyptian monarchical regime

²⁹ Goldschmidt, 2004: p.153; <http://edition.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/kbank/profiles/nasser> (22 November 2006).

³⁰ Goldschmidt, 2004: p.158; Sayigh & Shlaim, 2003: p.37

³¹ "to Sadat it was not ideology, nor notions of global Cold War strategy, that impelled him to sign the treaty; it was more a matter of his own political survival. Sadat could not embark on a major shift in Egypt's economic and foreign policies without establishing a legitimacy that was independent of Nasser's. [...] This he could only do if he were to prove to the population that he was worthy of their support. Sadat soon realized that such an image transformation would occur only if he were to reverse the disastrous consequences of the Six-Day War by engaging the Israelis in a new conflict from which he would emerge victorious, even if in a limited way." Sayigh & Shlaim, 2003: pp.37-38

³² In May 1971 Sadat outmanoeuvred a conspiracy between his rivals for power, and was subsequently able to assert himself and appoint his own followers, rather than Free Officer colleagues, to leadership positions. Anti-Sadat government members were purged and arrested, they were often considered pro-Soviet, leftwing and hostile to settlement with Israel. Sadat's victory has been called the Corrective Revolution and is said to have marked the beginning of Sadat's shift from Nasser's policies. Goldschmidt, 2004: pp.154-161;

<http://www.onwar.com/aced/chrono/c1900s/yr70/fegypt1971a.htm> (22 November 2006).

³³ Goldschmidt, 2004: p.155; Shlaim, 2001: p.302; Touval, 1982: p.155

³⁴ Shlaim, 2001: p.302

in 1952, and from the time Nasser became president in 1954 until his death in 1970, Sadat held important positions in the Egyptian government. Both leaders had an authoritarian style and controlled the foreign policy decisions of Egypt. One could say that the Jarring mission took place at the crossroads between the foreign policy directions of Nasser and Sadat. At the time of the Jarring mission, both heads of state aimed to regain all the Egyptian territories occupied by Israel in 1967, preferably by negotiation.³⁵ Whoever initiated the new foreign policy, we can discern in retrospect that changes were taking place around the time Sadat came to power. The outcome was Sadat's initiative and his positive response to Jarring's plan during the winter of 1970-1971. However, the shift was probably not easily discernible to his contemporaries.

The more conciliatory position of Sadat was anyhow frustrated by the Israeli reluctance to enter into any kind of agreement in 1970 and 1971. In addition, Sadat, who might still have preferred to work for a political solution to the conflict, was under considerable pressure from a hawkish faction within the Egyptian army. The militants, under the leadership of the Chief of Staff, Ahmed Sadeq, took the view that there was no hope of achieving a total withdrawal of the Israeli forces, even from only the Egyptian territories, by any other means than war.³⁶ As a result of internal pressure, the Egyptian representatives to the Jarring talks were forced to demand quick results from the talks under Jarring's auspices as a counterbalance to the military hawks.³⁷ Sadat's line reversed towards the Yom Kippur War in October 1973. Sadat's alternative approach only became visible to the public after the October War. In 1978 Sadat's comparatively moderate policy materialized when Egypt signed a peace agreement with Israel at Camp David.

Challenges for King Hussein

Following the Six-Day War, 200 000 new Palestinian refugees fled from Israel and the occupied areas. Many of these Palestinians settled in refugee camps in Jordan. Based in these camps, the Palestinians started to form a political entity in Jordan, which eventually threatened the regime of King Hussein.

The experience of the Six-Day War led to a growing self-awareness among the Palestinian Arabs. Israel had occupied the remainder of the land intended for the Palestinian Arabs in 1947, and had thus demonstrated its superiority over the forces of the Arab states.³⁸ Furthermore, the peace effort of the UN through Resolution 242, did not mention the political and national rights of the Palestinian people. Frustrated and disillusioned Palestinians now started to believe that the Arab

³⁵ When Sadat's peace plan in February 1971 failed, it is plausible that he felt the only option left was war.

³⁶ Gillon, David: "The prospects for the Jarring talks" in *the World Today*, Vol. 27, no. 2, 1971: p.50

³⁷ Gillon, 1971: p.52

³⁸ In the war of 1949, Israel, Jordan and Egypt had occupied all the areas intended for the Palestinian Arabs. The parts of the Palestinian areas controlled by Jordan and Egypt after 1949 were following the Six-Day War on Israeli hands.

states could not be relied on to fight for Palestinian liberation, and that only through their own organizations could they recover territory and advance their goals. The Palestinian nationalist movement was given a boost, and the many guerrilla organizations associated with it grew rapidly after the war. These groups looked for alternatives to conventional inter-state warfare, and as a result Israel was repeatedly hit with cross-border attacks by Palestinian guerrillas.³⁹

At first, the Jordanian government did relatively little to discourage the guerrilla activists. Many Jordanians sympathised with the plight of the Palestinian refugees, and the top priority for Jordan at the time was to rebuild its military capability. Palestinian guerrilla forces coexisted with the Jordanian army. However, the Jordanian military remained confident that it could handle the Palestinian resistance. When Israeli forces attacked a Palestinian guerrilla stronghold in Jordan, the village of Karamah, in March 1968, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the government of Jordan worked together and forced Israel to withdraw. However, the joint efforts at the battle of Karamah were as good as the relationship would get. The victory against Israel boosted the morale of the Palestinian guerrilla organizations, and soon the guerrillas seized control of the Palestinian liberation movement and virtually developed a state within a state. As a result the activities of the guerrillas shifted from fighting Israel to challenging the reign of King Hussein.⁴⁰ The struggle for political control between the government and the guerrilla organizations was to become the main issue in Jordanian internal politics in the late 1960s.⁴¹

The situation became explosive when the guerrillas in September 1970 launched an airplane hijacking campaign. The hijacking was part of an attempt to undermine the resumption of the Jarring peace talks to which Egypt, Israel, and Jordan had agreed to under the Rogers Plan.⁴² The Rogers Plan was built on UN Resolution 242, which neglected the Palestinian cause, and the PLO therefore rejected it fiercely. In response to the threat to his authority and directly to the airplane hijackings, King Hussein ordered, on September 16, 1970, his army to quell the guerrilla organizations. The guerrillas were ordered to immediately lay down their arms and to evacuate the cities of Jordan.⁴³

The civil war lasted for ten days. At the height of the crisis, Syria stepped in on the side of the Palestinians and sent an armoured column across its border with Jordan. Hussein called for help from Washington, and at the request of the US, Israel reinforced its positions along the Syrian border and prepared to impede the Syrian intervention. Deterred by the Jordanian response and the Israeli

³⁹ Robins, 2004: pp.124-126

⁴⁰ The guerrillas obtained funds and arms from both the Arab states and Eastern Europe and openly violated Jordanian law. In Palestinian enclaves and refugee camps in Jordan, the Jordanian police and army were losing their authority.

⁴¹ Robins, 2004: pp.126-128; Sayigh & Shlaim, 2003: pp.117-119; Shlaim, 2001: pp.298-299
<http://www.onwar.com/aced/data/bravo/blacksept1970.htm> (28 November 2006).

⁴² The Rogers plan will be treated below.

⁴³ Robins, 2004: pp.130-131; Sayigh & Shlaim, 2003: pp.117-119;
<http://www.onwar.com/aced/data/bravo/blacksept1970.htm> (28 November 2006).

show of support, Syria withdrew its forces from Jordan. The Palestinian guerrillas were left to fight for their cause alone. After their comprehensive defeat, most of the guerrillas fled or surrendered to the Jordanian authorities. For the next months the Jordanian government systematically weeded out the military presence of the PLO in the country. By the summer of 1971, The Jordanian state had regained its supremacy.⁴⁴

The civil war caused great material destruction in Jordan, and the number of fighters killed on all sides was estimated to be as high as 3,500. The Syrian forces retreated, the Palestinian guerrilla organizations fled the country, and King Hussein remained firmly on his throne in Amman. However, Hussein was criticized by parts of the Arab world. He was accused of harsh treatment of the Palestinians in Jordan, and of being responsible for the deaths of many fellow Arabs.⁴⁵

Hussein received extensive Arab criticism from abroad for his rough handling of the Palestinian refugees in Jordan during the civil war. This must have contributed to the deterioration of Hussein's relations with neighbouring Arab states. However, the criticism from the Arab states must have mainly come from states of a radical orientation. The financial support Jordan received from the Arab world came mainly from the conservative and pro-western Arab states. Furthermore, Jordan had received decisive support from Israel and the US during the crisis of September 1970. This represented a certain healing of Jordan's relations with the two countries, which had deteriorated drastically as a result of the Six-Day War. The development could have had a positive effect on the Jordanian co-operation with Israel, and also on the Israeli position on peace with Jordan. Israel and the US preferred an agreement between Israel and Jordan. Jordan represented a more moderate standpoint than Egypt, and the country depended on aid from pro-western states and was therefore susceptible to their influence. However, this interaction may also have been a reason for further criticism from radical Arabs, which would have reduced Hussein's room for manoeuvre unless he was prepared to risk isolation from the Arab world. After having observed the clear American pro-Israeli bias, this was not a desirable move for King Hussein.

Although the civil war was over by October 1970, shortly after the Jarring mission was resumed, it sidetracked the peace process. In addition, the friction between the Palestinian guerrilla organizations and the government of Jordan continued, and overlapped, with the second phase of the Jarring mission. Tension was still tangible when Jarring left behind his peace mission in the Middle East on 7 March, 1971. During the second phase of the Jarring mission, the Special Representative chose to focus on a peace agreement between Egypt and Israel. King Hussein was now occupied with considerable domestic problems, which prevented a full Jordanian focus on the peace process.

⁴⁴ Robins, 2004: pp.130-131; Sayigh & Shlaim, 2003: pp.117-119; Shlaim, 2001: pp.298-299; Thant, 1978: p.344

⁴⁵ Shlaim, 2001: pp.298-299; <http://www.onwar.com/aced/data/bravo/blacksept1970.htm> (28 November 2006).

It is plausible that this was a factor in tipping the scales when Jarring decided to tone down the Jordanian involvement in the peace talks from August 1970. Hostilities had been increasing in Jordan from mid-1968, and throughout the mission Jarring argued repeatedly that Hussein was not strong enough to take a crucial step towards peace without the legitimacy of following in Egyptian footsteps. The outbreak of the civil war must have reinforced Jarring in his conviction that Jordan could not move alone.

War of Attrition

The Israel Defense Force's (IDF) unprecedented victory in the 1967 Six-Day War put the Sinai Peninsula, up to the eastern bank of the Suez Canal, in Israel's hands. The cease-fire between Israel and Egypt was repeatedly violated from the end of the Six-Day War, and by March 1969 it had become totally ineffective. The high tension on the border between Israel and Egypt was one of the factors that led the Jarring mission to evaluate its future course, and in April 1969, shortly after the outbreak of the so called War of Attrition, it was decided to give the mission a rest.⁴⁶

Egypt's President Nasser was frustrated by the fact that the diplomatic track had not brought a withdrawal of the Israeli forces, and decided that what "was taken by force can only be recovered by force."⁴⁷ Nasser launched the War of Attrition in order to prevent the Suez Canal from becoming the de facto border against Israel, and to force the Israelis to withdraw from the Sinai and to calm agitated elements in Egypt. The strategy of attrition was chosen because Egypt, as the weaker party to the conflict, could not foresee a quick decision over the stronger party, Israel. The Suez Canal allowed a static military situation because it lay between the opposing forces and impeded an Israeli advance on the ground. The idea was to exhaust Israel militarily, economically and psychologically, by attacking the Israeli positions along the canal, by launching occasional air assaults, and by executing hit-and-run commando raids on Israeli territory. If Egypt could prevent a decisive blow from Israel, they might manage to exhaust the Israeli will to continue fighting without making important concessions, and perhaps soften its stand with respect to negotiations. The fighting was also intended to stimulate the great powers to intervene and exert pressure on Israel to withdraw from the occupied areas.⁴⁸ Israel responded to Egypt's attack by constructing fortifications all along its side of the canal aimed at preventing the Egyptian army from crossing the canal and capturing

⁴⁶ Goldschmidt, 2004: p.152; Kriesberg, 1992: p.140; Rafael: 1981: p.201; Rubinstein, 1977: p.117; Shlaim, 2001: p.289; Thant, 1978: pp.322-326, pp.335-6

⁴⁷ Shlaim, 2001: p.289

⁴⁸ Shlaim, 2001: p.289; Touval, 1982: p.167

territory on the east bank.⁴⁹ While the Arabs tried to change the situation, the Israelis tried to maintain it.

After months of inconclusive warfare, Israel escalated its fighting; implementing a strategy based on deep penetration sorties. This involved Israeli bombing of the Egyptian interior bringing the war to towns like Cairo, Alexandria and Aswan, which inflicted serious damage on the Egyptian war machine. The lack of effective Egyptian air defence gave Israel's air force virtual freedom of action over the Egyptian territory.⁵⁰ Prime Minister Golda Meir aimed at preserving the territorial status quo and not yield an inch until the Arabs agreed to a peace treaty. However, the Egyptian army was surprisingly persistent in the face of the Israeli forces because in response to the Israeli's upgraded fighting Nasser flew to Moscow in January 1970 requesting urgent help from the Soviets. The Russian answer was to provide Egypt with sophisticated military equipment, aircrafts and technicians to operate it.⁵¹ Never before had the Soviet Union provided such advanced military equipment into a non-communist country so quickly and soon the Israeli superiority in the air was severely curtailed. Although the US kept supplying Israel with important new weapon-systems, Israel was forced to scale down its air offensive.⁵²

The bombing of the interior of Egypt ceased, but the warfare across the Suez Canal continued until June 1970, when it was ended by a cease-fire agreement initiated by the American Secretary of State, William P. Rogers. According to the agreement, the parties agreed to a ninety day long cease-fire and a resumption of the Jarring talks.

External Involvement

The regional developments, and the Jarring mission, were susceptible to the influence of concurrent external factors. Cooperation between the great powers increased considerably in 1969. For the first time, representatives from the US, the Soviet Union, Britain and France, met regularly with the aim of reaching a mutually acceptable interpretation of Resolution 242 that would function as a guideline for Gunnar Jarring. However, their efforts broke down before the Jarring mission was resumed. Following the collapse of great power talks, the US took over the international initiative in the area. In January 1969 Richard M. Nixon replaced Lyndon B. Johnson in the White House, and the new administration set out to formulate its own more proactive policy toward the Middle East. The augmented US activity in Middle East diplomacy

⁴⁹ Rafael, 1981: p.201, Shlaim, 2001: p.289

⁵⁰ Eban, 1977: p.465; Khalidi, Ahmed S., "The War of Attrition" in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol.3 no 1, 1973: pp.60-61; Kissinger, 1979: p.558-569; Rafael, 1981: pp.204-205

⁵¹ Goldschmidt, 2004: p.152; Rafael, 1981: p.207; Shlaim, 2001: p.294

⁵² Goldschmidt, 2004: p.152; Rafael, 1981: p.207-209; Shlaim, 2001: p.294

resulted in an attempt that succeeded in creating a cease-fire agreement between Egypt and Israel in the War of Attrition and restarting the Jarring mission. As we shall see in chapter 5, the increased American initiative in the Middle East had implications for the development of Jarring's role and his level of activity in the second phase of the mission.

From Johnson to Nixon

The three years and four months focused on in the present study, partially overlap with two American administrations. During the first phase of the Jarring mission, the US Middle East policy was dominated by the Johnson administration, while the second phase was dominated by the Nixon administration.⁵³

Throughout the Jarring mission, the American involvement in the Middle East was marked by the reluctance of the presidents to get deeply involved in conflict resolution in the area. Still, the degree of activity in the Middle East would differ from the Johnson to the Nixon period. While, in general terms, the Johnson administration passively waited for things to happen in the Middle East, Nixon personally kept himself out of the line of fire, but, nevertheless, authorized his State Department to pursue a more active Middle East policy.⁵⁴

Certain concerns were decisive in the making of US foreign policy under both presidents. Within the Cold War framework, the US was continuously concerned with containing Soviet influence in the Middle East.⁵⁵ Throughout Jarring's effort the Vietnam War was raging and the US had a large number of troops deployed in Southeast Asia. The direct involvement of American citizens in Vietnam made the problems and needs of the Middle East seem less pressing for the Americans. In addition, the deep involvement in Vietnam was domestically and internationally disputed. The political and economic cost of the war left both presidents vulnerable to additional controversies, making them less willing to get entangled in Middle East diplomacy. The intractable positions of the parties to the conflict made a solution highly uncertain and influenced the president's decision on the degree of American involvement in the area.⁵⁶

The passivity of the Johnson administration in the Middle East can be attributed principally to the concerns mentioned above. Deeply entangled in Vietnam, the Johnson administration treated the Middle East as a secondary problem. Lyndon B Johnson was in addition a friend of Israel. When the Six Day War erupted in the Middle East, Johnson was resolute not to pressure the Israelis to return the occupied territories in return for little or nothing. However, Johnson held that the

⁵³ The Middle East policies of Johnson are also treated in chapter 3, and those of Nixon are treated in chapter 5.

⁵⁴ See Quandt, 1993: pp.25-93; Spiegel, Steven L: *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 1985: pp.118-218

⁵⁵ See Sayigh & Shlaim, 2003: pp.1-19

⁵⁶ Eban, 1977: p.458; Quandt, 1993: pp.5, 68-70

territories should be exchanged for a genuine peace agreement. This would take time, and time seemed to be on Israel's side, because the Israelis could endure the status quo. However, it was less likely that the Arabs could do the same. It was therefore decided that the best way to reach the goal was to let time pass hoping that this would eventually lead to important Arab concessions.⁵⁷

As president, Nixon hoped to re-establish a degree of national consensus over foreign policy goals, which had been utterly shattered by the controversy over the Vietnam War. To get enmeshed in Middle East diplomacy held no prospect of helping towards this aspiration. Nevertheless, at the time Nixon assumed the presidency in 1969, tension was rising in the Middle East and it was difficult for a superpower to stand by and passively watch the violent developments of the region. However, US public opinion was still very pro-Israeli, and since the Arab countries were still militarily weak compared to Israel, American strategic interests did not seem threatened. The political issues of the Middle East could, therefore, be held outside the president's primary concerns, and Nixon delegated the State Department to pursue Arab-Israeli diplomacy.⁵⁸

The US State Department had traditionally advocated a more even-handed policy towards the Middle East than Congress and public opinion.⁵⁹ The passive approach of the Johnson administration had failed in the sense that Jordan and Egypt had not been persuaded to make any important concessions, and Israel became more and more insistent upon keeping the occupied areas. The State Department had therefore for some time advocated an active US role in promoting a political settlement based on Resolution 242. As a result, an increasingly even-handed and more active policy was fronted by the State Department during the first year of Nixon's presidency.⁶⁰ Nixon, however, calculated that almost any active policy towards the Middle East would fail. In order to avoid certain controversy, and angry supporters of Israel in the US, Nixon kept his own person, and the White House, out of the direct line of fire. If there was progress in the Middle East, everyone would still be praised for the achievement.⁶¹

The State Department directed Middle East policy led to a surprisingly even-handed peace initiative towards the end of 1969.⁶² However, the failure of this effort, accompanied by the escalation of Soviet involvement in Egypt during the War of Attrition, triggered a reassessment of the American Middle East policy. As a result, control over the making of the US Middle East policy slipped further and further out of the hands of the State Department and closer to the supporters of a

⁵⁷ Quandt, 1993: pp.25; 54

⁵⁸ Quandt, 1993: pp.71-72; Rafael, 1981: p.210

⁵⁹ Here even-handed mean a posture that was neither predominantly pro-Arab nor overtly pro-Israeli. Quandt, 1993: p.73

⁶⁰ Hoff, Joan: *Nixon Reconsidered*, 1994: pp.252-259; Kissinger, 1979: p.350; Quandt, 1993: pp.71-73; Shlaim, 2001: pp.290-291

⁶¹ Kissinger, 1979: p.348; Quandt, 1993: p.69

⁶² This US initiative will be treated below.

more pro-Israeli approach in the administration. Among this faction was Henry Kissinger, Nixon's National Security Adviser, who would later be in charge of the American policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. Kissinger was sceptical of the virtues of even-handedness. He looked at Israel as an asset in the Cold War and that a diplomatic stalemate, in which Israel was kept strong, would ultimately wear the Arabs out to the point that they were convinced that it was pointless to look to the Soviets for assistance. In that case they would turn to the US, and this would force Moscow. Nixon's Middle East policy thus became to keep Israel strong and to maintain the cease-fire lines until they were replaced by a permanent peace.⁶³

Towards the end of the Jarring mission the US tendency to fully support Israel's position was to become increasingly explicit, and from 1969, the US strategy gradually became to maintain the stalemate.⁶⁴ On 22 December 1970 Washington signed the greatest transfer of technology to Israel ever undertaken until then. This transfer would enable Israel to produce American weapons at home. A month later, Nixon also promised Israel an extraordinary aid package of supplemental support. This helped convince Israel that it was so strong that it was not necessary to negotiate with its Arab neighbours, who were demanding the return of the territories Israel occupied in 1967.⁶⁵ The failure of the first Rogers plan set in motion a cycle in which every negotiation step that Israel disapproved of was coupled with a step-up of Israeli assistance programs without achieving a real meeting of minds with Israel.⁶⁶ In the end, Nixon undercut his own Middle East policy by signalling to Israel and the Soviet Union that the State Department initiatives were not to be taken seriously.⁶⁷ Nixon thus fulfilled Golda Meir's prediction that the Secretary of State's peace efforts were "doomed to founder on the Rocks of the White House."⁶⁸

The two administrations posited themselves at different levels of activity in the Middle East during the Jarring Mission. The Johnson administration was rather passive in the post 1967-war diplomacy, while the Nixon administration actually made active peace initiatives. However, the two approaches in the end produced the same lack of outcome. The Nixon administration proved no more willing than the Johnson administration to use its authority to encourage Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967. It was not even willing to put weight behind initiatives issued by its own State Department. The results of the increased American activity under Richard Nixon's presidency will be discussed below.

⁶³ Eban, 1977: p.462; Hoff, 1994: pp.252-259; Quandt, 1993: pp.66, 73, 83, 91-92; Rabin, 1979: pp.145-146; Rafael, 1981: p.217; Touval, 1982: p.168; van der Linden, Frank: *Nixon's Quest for Peace*, 1972: p.75

⁶⁴ Kissinger, 1979: pp.376-378; Touval, 1982: pp.166-169

⁶⁵ Neff, 1995: pp.175-176

⁶⁶ Kissinger, 1979: p.377

⁶⁷ Hoff, 1994: pp.252-259; Kissinger, 1979: p.377

⁶⁸ Rafael, 1981: p.210

Great Power Talks

During the first phase of the Jarring mission the great powers acted mainly unilaterally. At the turn of the year 1968–1969, the interaction between them was about to take a new course. Upon a request from the French President, Charles de Gaulle, in January 1969, the United States, the Soviet Union, France and Britain agreed to meet for joint discussions in order to search for alternative approaches to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The dialogues were pursued throughout most of 1969.⁶⁹

The great power meetings were a natural response to the increased tension in the Middle East. The War of Attrition was mounting, the crisis in Lebanon was in the pipeline and the Jarring mission approached 16 months of inactivity. These factors increased the prospect of superpower confrontation in the Middle East, which neither the US nor the Soviet Union wanted. The US and the Soviet Union had serious worries on different fronts, and could not spare the costs and energies that a renewed war in the Middle East would imply. At the beginning of March 1969 military clashes broke out along the border between the Soviet Union and China. The Chinese and Soviet troops continued to clash during the next six months along the Ussuri River.⁷⁰ An attempt to collaborate to defuse the conflict before it escalated further was preferable to the alternative. In a period of détente, the two governments could communicate without embarrassment.⁷¹ The two European countries, France and Britain, wished to be included in great power talks in order to uphold their waning position as influential powers on the World scene.⁷² France and Britain, much less potent in the Middle East than the two superpowers, were troubled by the economic dangers of another war.⁷³ The interaction between the great powers on the subject of the Middle East was consequently boosted, but as we have seen, not exclusively for the sake of the Middle East.⁷⁴

Representatives from the great powers met in twos and fours. The quadruple power talks were held between the UN ambassadors of the four countries. The duple power talks, on the other hand, included only the Russians and the Americans, and were kept outside the UN framework. The bulk of the dual nation talks were held between the US Assistant Secretary for International Affairs, Joseph Sisco, and the Soviet Ambassador to the US, Anatoli Dobrynin.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Brecher, 1974: p.456; Kissinger, 1979: pp. 350-379; Quandt, 1993: pp.74-85; Rafael, 1981; p.207; Touval, 1982: pp.149-151

⁷⁰ Rubinstein, 1977: pp.79-80

⁷¹ Quandt, 1993: p.70; Touval, 1982: pp.149-151

⁷² Touval, 1982: pp.149-151

⁷³ Kissinger, 1979: pp.346-347

⁷⁴ Touval, 1982: p.150

⁷⁵ Kissinger, 1979: pp. 350-379; van der Linden, 1972: p.73-74; Quandt, 1993: p.76; Touval, 1982: pp.149-151

The US set the tone of the talks by insisting that participation was conditional upon the joint talks being designed to support the Jarring mission.⁷⁶ This was the result of Israeli concern that the talks between the outside powers would substitute direct talks between Israel, Jordan and Egypt. The Israelis therefore insisted that they would not receive Jarring if he was sent to negotiate an agreement reached by the great powers. The status quo was *not* intolerable for the Israelis, and they preferred that the US avoided an active role letting Jarring take his own course. Israel had no incentive to back the peace process because they were superior in military strength to the Arabs combined, and could afford to wait out the situation until the Arabs met their demands. The domestic criticism in the US from both houses of Congress of an active policy that could harm Israel's interests, contributed to the American insistence on acting through Jarring.⁷⁷ The aim of the great power conferences became to produce an agreed interpretation of UN Resolution 242 to be used as a guideline for Gunnar Jarring and as a support for his mission.⁷⁸

The meetings started in February, 1969, and continued on a regular basis until June. At that point the positions of the superpowers had become quite well defined. However, the positions were far apart, and neither of the superpowers could proceed further without seeing a concession being made by the other side. Consequently their positions remained frozen for the rest of the summer. The meeting of the UN General Assembly in September provided a new impetus for the great power talks. The US Secretary of State, William Rogers, asked President Nixon for authority to present the US fallback position to the Soviets. The hope was that this would provide a concession substantial enough to produce movement on the part of the Russians. As we have seen above, Nixon agreed to let Rogers go ahead with his proposal. However, Nixon never gave his Secretary of State any public backing. In addition, he assured Israel that he had doubts about the policy of the State Department, and that Israel would not be forced to do anything against its will. Nixon thereby undermined the authority of his Secretary of State.⁷⁹

The US Secretary of State, William Rogers, forwarded his first peace plan for the Middle East to the Soviet Union in late October 1969.⁸⁰ Rogers I was based on UN Resolution 242 and proposed Israel's return to the international borders with Egypt, with only minor rectifications of the boundaries for mutual security.⁸¹ This equalled the line held by Israel before the Six-Day War,

⁷⁶ Touval, 1982: p.151

⁷⁷ NA box 1814, 15 March 1969: cable from Rogers to Tel Aviv; Kissinger, 1979: pp.353-359; Thant, 1978: p.319; Touval, 1982: pp.149-150

⁷⁸ Quandt, 1993: p.75; Rabin, 1979: p.146; Touval, 1982: p.151

⁷⁹ Kissinger, 1979: p.350-379; Quandt, 1993: pp.74-85

⁸⁰ Quandt, 1993: pp.80-85; Rabin, 1979: p.164; Rafael, 1981: pp.209-211; Shlaim, 2001: pp.290-291; Touval, 1982: pp.154-155

⁸¹ The initiative taken by US Secretary of State, Rogers, in 1969, is often called Rogers I. It is also termed the Rogers Plan.

except the Gaza Strip. The future disposition of the Gaza strip was to remain open. Rogers' plan also envisaged a solution of the refugee problem and planned for freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran and the Suez Canal. A similar plan for Jordan was circulated in December. This document similarly stated that the border should approximate the armistice line existing before 1967. In return for the Israeli withdrawal, Egypt and Jordan were to conclude binding peace accords with Israel. These accords were to be negotiated under the auspices of UN Ambassador Jarring.⁸²

Rogers I was presented jointly to Egypt by the US and the Soviet Union on 10 November. After nearly a month with no elaborate answer from Egypt and no official comment from the Soviets, Secretary Rogers outlined the basic points of the plan in a public speech on 9 December. This caused harsh reactions from Israel and amongst the many supporters of Israel in the US. Israel repeated its demand that no outside power could spell out the premises for peace, prescribe boundaries, or impose a settlement. This would compromise Israeli sovereignty. At the same time, Rogers I weakened Israel's bargaining power in potential future boundary negotiations.⁸³ On 23 December the Soviet Union delivered an official note rejecting the Rogers plan. The rejections from the Soviet Union and Israel along with Egypt's noncommittal answer reduced the first Rogers plan to rubble.⁸⁴ When Rogers' proposal was rejected the great power talks collapsed, and were not resumed again during the Jarring mission.

The lack of movement between the great powers was not a surprise. One could argue that a viable agreement between the great powers was much less likely than disagreement and eventual failure. The US did not intend to change the status quo, because Israel did not want it to do so. The Israeli Foreign Minister, Abba Eban, was informed by the Americans that the US did not wish to be party to a settlement themselves. Nevertheless, they could not be seen in a position where they appeared not to want progress.⁸⁵ The Soviet refusal to accept the first Rogers plan, although it was closer to the Arab viewpoint than the US position had ever been before, demonstrates a similar attitude. This points in the direction that neither superpower was willing to lean on its client in order to produce progress in the conflict. The decision to enter into mutual talks was more a necessary consequence of the tension in the area than a real attempt to solve the situation. The discussions, therefore, could be seen as a cover for allowing the status quo to prevail. They avoided direct action in the area by holding talks on alternative issues, and thus kept relative peace between the superpowers.

⁸² Brecher, 1974: pp.454-455; Kissinger, 1979: p.375; Quandt, 1993: pp.80-85; Shlaim, 2001: pp.290-291; Touval, 1982: pp.154-155

⁸³ Eban, 1977: p.464; Rafael, 1981: p.210

⁸⁴ Kissinger 1979: pp.375-378; Quandt, 1993: pp. 81-82; van der Linden, 1972: p.74

⁸⁵ See Eban, 1977: pp.448-470

During the first phase of the Jarring mission, cooperation between the great powers was still viable, but at the outset of the second phase this was no longer an option.⁸⁶ One plausible effect of the failed cooperation is that Jarring might have lost his safety net, no longer able to rely on eventual great power intervention.⁸⁷ If he decided to leave his mission, there would be no one there to pick up where he left off. The great powers had demonstrated their inability to act jointly. In addition, they had failed to agree on Jarring's terms of reference, adding to the ambiguity of Resolution 242 and further undermining Jarring's mandate through the resolution.

Rogers II

The even-handed wording of Rogers I can be seen as a symptom of the prominent role of the US State Department in the development of American Middle East policy during the first year and a half of the Nixon administration. However, the rejection of the first Rogers plan and the breakdown of the great power talks, led the US to reassess its policy towards the Middle East.⁸⁸ The result was a change of approach that gave other branches of the government agencies greater influence in the development of the US Middle East policy.⁸⁹

The need to end the fighting in the Middle East became more urgent as the violence escalated during the first half of 1970. The State Department therefore launched another initiative on 19 June, 1970: Rogers II.⁹⁰ The new proposal was not coordinated with Moscow and was thus not a multilateral effort, as Rogers I, but a unilateral American initiative.⁹¹

The proposal consisted of three parts. First of all, a 90 days cease-fire was to be implemented on the border between Egypt and Israel. It also contained a provision to prevent the use of Egyptian and Israeli weapon systems during the cease-fire. Secondly, Israel, Egypt and Jordan were asked to make a statement articulating their acceptance of the UN Resolution 242. Thirdly, upon accepting Rogers II, all three states agreed to resume the peace talks under Jarring's auspices as soon as the cease-fire came into force.⁹² On 23 July, after about a month of silence, Egypt accepted the proposal. A few days later, Jordan followed suit.⁹³ Finally, seemingly dragging its feet, Israel accepted the second Rogers plan on 31 July.⁹⁴

⁸⁶ Touval, 1982: p.154

⁸⁷ Touval, 1982: p.154

⁸⁸ Kissinger, 1979: p.376; Quandt, 1993: pp.82-83; Touval, 1982: pp.166-167

⁸⁹ Quandt, 1993: p.84

⁹⁰ Also called Rogers B

⁹¹ This infuriated the Soviet Union, fearing that the Americans attempted to take over the Middle East diplomacy. Kissinger, 1979: p.579

⁹² Brecher, 1974: pp.454-517; Quandt, 1993: p.89; Rafael, 1981: p.224; Shlaim, 2001: p.295; Touval, 1982: pp.165-177

⁹³ At the time Jordan accepted Rogers II, it was not certain who would rule in Amman the next months.

⁹⁴ Quandt, 1993: pp.88-90; Shlaim, 2001: pp.295-296; Touval, 1982: pp.170-175

The American proposal was a compromise formula with both acceptable and unsatisfactory elements to both sides. Rogers II suggested that Jarring recommend the time, place and procedures of the meetings to which Egypt and Israel would send their representatives. Both Israel and Egypt had up until this point reserved the right to reject Jarring's procedural proposals.⁹⁵ Egypt did not want an unlimited cease-fire, from fear that the Israelis would make the cease-fire lines permanent through the passing of time and building of settlements in the occupied areas. The indication in Rogers II that the length of the cease-fire, beyond the 90 days, was conditional upon the progress of the Jarring talks thus may be said to concede to the Egyptian wish for a cease-fire of limited duration. However, Rogers II did not meet the Egyptian demand for an Israeli commitment to withdrawal from the occupied territories prior to discussions. Israel, on the other hand, had called for an unconditional and unlimited cease-fire. The Israeli Prime Minister, Golda Meir, was worried that Egypt would use the 90 days to recover, and then restart the fighting. However, a cease-fire was far more preferable to the Israelis than a peace plan like Rogers I. A cease-fire is a temporary stoppage of war, and thus aims at less than the goals of a peace plan. Rogers I was a peace plan because it aimed at a final solution to the conflict in the form of a reciprocally binding peace agreement. Israel was in no rush to reach a final agreement. A cease-fire was easier to break, and to interpret as broken, than a peace plan because the parties to the conflict were not asked to commit to the conclusion of a final peace accord. In effect, the Rogers II merely committed the adversaries to the renewal of the Jarring talks.⁹⁶ It might therefore be fair to say that Rogers II was much closer to the Israeli position than to the Egyptian demands.

It is, at first glance, difficult to understand why Egypt accepted Rogers II when it rejected the first of Rogers' plans, which was much closer to the Egyptian position. And why was it seemingly difficult for Israel to accept the second Rogers plan?

Egypt was increasingly suffering from the stalemate in the War of Attrition. The use of Egyptian force and Soviet aid had proved to be insufficient to force Israel to withdraw from Sinai. At the same time Egypt was unable to persuade the Soviet Union to provide sufficient military backing for an escalation. The US seemed to be more competent to bring about an Israeli withdrawal. Nasser had little reason to hope for much help from the US, but optimistically a positive Egyptian response to the US might prevent new American shipments of arms to Israel, which could reduce the hostilities.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Quandt, 1993: pp.88-90; Shlaim, 2001: pp.295-296; Touval, 1982: pp.170-175

⁹⁶ Quandt, 1993: pp.88-90; Rafael, 1981: pp.224-226; Shlaim, 2001: pp.295-296; Touval, 1982: pp.170-175

⁹⁷ Quandt, 1993: pp.88-89; Rafael, 1981: p.221; Touval, 1982: p.170

Egypt might have thought it unlikely that Israel would accept Rogers I. For the Egyptians, the making of a final peace agreement would equal recognition of Israel, and this would expose the Egyptian government to criticism from Arabs nationally and internationally. This would especially be the case if Israel rejected the proposal after Egypt had already given its acceptance. With that in mind, Rogers II was easier to accept.

Israel was worried that an acceptance of Rogers II would imply that the US would exert pressure on it to implement Rogers I at a later stage. Israel therefore needed assurances that this would not happen. On 24 July President Nixon sent a letter to Golda Meir in which he reconfirmed to the Israelis that the future boundaries had to be agreed upon between the parties themselves through negotiations under the auspices of Gunnar Jarring. He assured Golda Meir that Israel would not have to withdraw its forces from the occupied territories until a peace agreement satisfactory to Israeli demands had been reached. This message provided the necessary guarantees. Israel accepted Rogers II on 31 July.⁹⁸

The War of Attrition may also have been a factor for the Israeli final choice to accept the proposal. The War of Attrition was at a point where Israel had to choose between escalating the warfare, or allow for a cease-fire. An escalation would not be popular in the US considering their public attempt to arrange a cease-fire. When Egypt in addition accepted the cease-fire in late July, an Israeli rejection was unsound. Israeli finally accepted Rogers II. The Israeli reply, however, led to the resignation of the Gahal ministers of the Israeli government.⁹⁹

Rogers II was far less ambitious than Rogers I, and refrained from addressing any issues of substance, as it did not attempt to interpret resolution 242. It said nothing about the final borders, underlining Nixon's affirmation that Israel would not be forced to withdraw. Rogers II merely ceased the fighting and reactivated the Jarring talks, thereby reverting to the deliberately vague language of Resolution 242.¹⁰⁰ The emphasis in Washington had "shifted from the spelling out of the ingredients of "peace" to the "process" of getting there."¹⁰¹

Jarring was probably disappointed by this American retreat from substance. Gunnar Jarring and his crew had been pleased by Rogers I.¹⁰² Although he never publicly stated it, Jarring admired

⁹⁸ Eban, 1977: pp.466-467; Quandt, 1993: pp.89-90; Rafael, 1981: pp.228, 252; Shlaim, 2001: pp.295-296; Touval, 1982: pp.171-175

⁹⁹ Brecher, 1974: p.457; Quandt, 1993: pp.89-90; Rafael, 1981: pp.214-215, 228-229; Shlaim, 2001: pp.295-296; Touval, 1982: pp.171-175

¹⁰⁰ Brecher, 1974: pp.508-509; Quandt, 1993: p.1

¹⁰¹ Quandt, 1993: p.1

¹⁰² Interview with Göran Berg, 7 December, 2006

the first Rogers plan. He later came to call the Secretary of State's speech on 9 December 1969 "his bible".¹⁰³

The revival of the Jarring mission through Rogers II, allowed Jarring a wider authority than he had exercised between 1967 and 1969, he was allowed to recommend the time, the place and the procedures of the discussions.¹⁰⁴ Yet Jarring himself viewed his mandate as inextricably linked to Resolution 242, and that only in cooperation with the parties to the conflict could his role expand. Presumably, he did not think that Rogers II could authorize a change in the scope of his mandate.¹⁰⁵ Rogers II led to an Israeli acceptance of Resolution 242. However, Israel had been an equal participant to the talks during the first phase, and in effect it did not constitute a considerable alteration of conditions for the Jarring mission. In addition, Rogers II made no attempt at interpreting the contents of the resolution, and therefore in reality it provided the Jarring mission with no new elements to build on. Jarring was basically left to pick up the pieces from where he left off in April 1969.

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As we have seen, the environment for the last phase of the Jarring mission had altered compared to that of the first phase. The factors explored above influenced the second phase, and largely affected the outcome of the Jarring mission. The Israeli policy towards the Arab states became increasingly frozen in its tracks throughout the Jarring mission. In Jordan, the difficult internal situation made the quite moderate and conciliatory King Hussein appear rather toothless, and prevented the Jordanians from moving independently towards peace with Israel. Jordan was dependent on Egypt's position on the peace process in order to make a move. Although there was a change in progress, the impending alteration in Egyptian foreign policy was not as yet discernible to outsiders at that point. The War of Attrition did not provide a conciliatory picture of the Egyptian policy towards Israel. The regional situation thus seemed quite intractable at the outset of the second phase of the Jarring mission. The great powers had, at least on the surface, tried to make a move towards settlement in the difficult situation and to support the continuation of the Jarring mission. Perhaps these initiatives were motivated mainly by the latter. These efforts had proven to be still born. In the end, a unilateral American initiative restarted the Jarring mission, but there was no substantial new element in the American initiated cease-fire agreement and it did not attempt to interpret the provisions of Resolution 242. A new situation thus faced the Jarring mission, yet he had no new means with which to meet the altered conditions.

¹⁰³ NA box 2071, 16 January 1971, cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

¹⁰⁴ Touval, 1982: p.154

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Göran Berg, 7 December, 2006

Incitement to Initiative

At the end of August 1970 the Jarring mission was resumed. During the following seven months, Jarring once again met frequently with representatives from Jordan, Egypt and Israel in New York, and in the capitals of the three countries. Apart from giving an account of the course of the last active phase of the mission, the chapter explores connections and developments between the first and second phases. Emphasis will be placed on the role of Gunnar Jarring. Moreover, the following section focuses on domestic, regional and international factors impinging on the course and outcome of the Jarring mission.

Jarring's Role

The second phase of the Jarring mission in many respects resembles the first. The procedures were more or less the same: Jarring shuttled between offices to meet with the participants to the talks and delivered their respective proposals and messages for one another. He thereby continued his role as a figurative mailbox or a switchboard operator. However, the end of the second phase witnessed a change in Jarring role, which seems to have brought him a long way from the mode of intervention used in the first phase. During the mission's last months Jarring abandoned his studied carefulness intended to keep the confidence of the parties to the conflict, a characteristic which had been quite pronounced, and at last actively intervened in the negotiating process by proposing his own peace plan dealing with fundamental problems in the conflict between Israel and Egypt. The peace plan represents a significant deviation from the visions Jarring had expressed in the past concerning his own role. The cautious and quiet diplomacy he had preferred was replaced by an approach based on initiative.

External Involvement

As mentioned above, a representative of the UN possesses no leverage or physical resources to force an agreement on the parties to the conflict. Progress towards settlement would either have to depend on the willingness of the adversaries to work towards peace, or on the great powers to lend a powerful hand to put pressure on the parties. During the second phase, Soviet involvement in the Middle East diplomacy was pushed further in the background by the American unilateral cease-fire agreement, Rogers II, while Jarring's contact with American officials increased

significantly.¹ It is relevant enquire why the American approach to the Middle East conflict altered, and what effect the new US attitude had on the outcome of the Jarring mission. What was the interaction between Jarring altered negotiating technique and the more active American approach towards Jarring's efforts?

Jarring's increased degree of activism may have been a natural development in the process of mediation. Weariness produced by the amount of fruitless rounds of talks with Israel, Jordan and Egypt may have been another reason to deviate from what he had formerly considered his range of options. There was not much hope left that the negotiations would ever emerge from the quagmire they were swamped in. Accordingly, Jarring's initiative might have been a case of sink or swim: The bold peace plan could either totally alter the dynamics of the dialogue or bring the Jarring mission to a final end. However, this thesis argues that the new turn of the Jarring mission and the development of Jarring's role were not merely a natural development or an effect of the mission's exhaustion. Nor was the new approach a consequence of Jarring's own choice. To a large degree, it seems to have been the result of persuasion from the new State Department under the Nixon administration.²

American Policy Towards the Jarring Mission

The reluctance of the Johnson administration to make new foreign policy engagements led to the decision that the US should not be an active peacemaker in the Middle East. During the Jarring mission's second phase, the new administration under Nixon allowed its State Department to participate in Middle East diplomacy.³ Jarring was in constant contact with American officials, primarily the US ambassador to the UN, Charles Yost, but also other State Department officials.⁴ In fact, Jarring had developed a rather good working relationship with the State Department, as opposed to what was the case during the first phase of the missions. A Jerusalem Post article from February 1971 claimed that the man behind Jarring was Secretary of State, William Rogers.⁵ When Jarring was confronted with the contents of the same article, he said he was glad to be in such good company.⁶

¹ See chapter 4: pp.79-81; 85-88

² While the US involvement increased towards the second phase of the Jarring mission, the Soviet activity decreased considerably. The unilateral initiative (Rogers II) reactivating the Jarring mission, placed the Soviet Union in the shadows of the Middle East diplomacy. The US remained the only active superpower.

³ See Chapter 3, and Chapter 4: pp.79-81

⁴ The American ambassador to the UN, Charles Yost, was a professional diplomat with previous experience in the Middle East as the US ambassador to Syria and as emissary to Egypt during the 1967 crisis. He tended to reflect a traditional State Department attitude. When President Nixon replaced him in late 1970 with the politically sensitive and compatible George Bush, rumours blamed the change of ambassador on Yost's attitude on Middle East questions. Brecher, 1974: p.177

⁵ Jerusalem Post article cited in: NA, box 2072, 23 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN, to the Secretary

⁶ NA, box 2072, 23 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN, to the Secretary

A growing sentiment at the State Department was that Jarring would have to be much more active than he had been in the past in order to make progress with the parties.⁷ Secretary of State Rogers expressed his concern that although Jarring was “acceptable to both sides, [...] he has up to now failed to exercise any real initiative”.⁸ The Americans criticised Jarring’s procedures up until this point. The principal official at the US interest section in Cairo,⁹ Donald C. Bergus, said at one point that he “shudder[ed] at the prospect of Jarring coming out to [the] area alone in [the] next few weeks. I guess there isn’t much we can do about it, but Jarring alone with the parties in one afternoon could undo what has been accomplished by US”.¹⁰ During the fall of 1970 and in early 1971, the US officials that were in contact with Jarring, therefore urged him to take an independent and active role in the negotiations, and not confine himself to serving as a mailbox.¹¹

Jarring would not, however, take advice from any external assistant. He was only susceptible to the influence of the UN Secretary General.¹² Accordingly the American attempts to sway Jarring went through U Thant. On behalf of the State Department, the American UN Undersecretary General Ralph Bunche was pushing matters along with his superior to advise Jarring to depart from his previous philosophy and play a more energetic and active role, and advance his own suggestions to the parties to the conflict.¹³

Tension existed within the American administration on the question of Middle East policy. It does not seem to be the case that Jarring had the same quality of collaboration with the rest of the US administration. Outside the State Department, an extraordinary effort was made to avoid interference by either the Security Council or the four powers, and instead a strict focus was kept on the talks under the sole auspices of Gunnar Jarring. The talks had been going for years without tangible result, and there were no immediate prospects of any settlement under Jarring. Great power intervention was more likely to produce substantial results. The American efforts to keep focus on the Jarring talks were thus probably aimed at providing Israel with as much time as possible. In the end, this course prevailed.¹⁴

⁷ NA, box 2066, 2 July 1970: cable from Johnson, Dept St, to Copenhagen

⁸ NA, box 2067, 24 July 1970: circular from the Secretary to USUN, London, Paris, Cairo, Amman, Beirut, Nicosia, Stockholm, Moscow, Jidda, Tel Aviv

⁹ Egypt had severed diplomatic relations with the US on 6 June, 1967. A U.S. Interests Section was established in the Spanish Embassy in Cairo the next day. The principal officer was Bergus from Sep 1967 to Feb 1972.

¹⁰ NA, box 2067, 29 July 1970: cable from Bergus, USINT, to the Secretary

¹¹ Kissinger, 1979: pp.1277-1279; Shlaim, 2001: p.299; Touval, 1982: p.157, Quandt: *Decade of Decisions*, 1977: pp.131, 134

¹² NA, box 2067, 27 July 1970: cable from Buffum, USUN to the Secretary

¹³ NA, box 2067, 27 July 1970: cable from Buffum, USUN to the Secretary; NA, box 2067, 5 August 1970: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

¹⁴ NA, box 2072, 13 February 1971: cable from Irwin, Dept St to Tel Aviv

President Nixon was ambivalent towards the Middle East policy. In addition his key advisers were not in agreement on how to proceed on the issue. With a view to the Cold War, Nixon believed that the US could best compete with Moscow by being impartial in the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, Nixon preferred the evenhandedness of the State Department to deal with the realities of the conflict. However, the US public opinion was still very pro-Israeli, and as a result, the State Department's traditional even-handed approach to the Middle East would increase disagreement in the foreign policy sphere. Nevertheless, it was difficult for a superpower to stand by and passively watch the violent developments of the region. The White House was busy handling issues connected to Vietnam and the Soviet Union, and had reduced capacity to handle the Arab-Israeli conflict. Moreover, participating in the peace diplomacy in the Middle East did not seem to threaten American interests in the region.¹⁵ In addition, the State Department was eager to play a leading role and had the necessary expertise. Nixon may also have found it convenient to entrust the State Department with the Middle East, as potential domestic controversy would be deflected towards the State Department rather than towards the White House.¹⁶

During the second phase of the mission, the gap increased between the views of the Nixon administration and the views of the Jarring mission regarding which approach to pursue in the Middle East. While the more pro-Israeli tone increasingly got the upper hand in the decision-making of US Middle East policy, Jarring's position was firm, and did not move closer to the Israeli position. Nixon avoided openly ending the State Department efforts, because such a move would provoke domestic controversy. He instead preferred to let the State Department initiative run its course without active backing from the White House. However, Nixon undercut the State Department by signalling to Israel and the Soviet Union that its initiatives were not to be taken seriously.¹⁷ Consequently, State Department initiatives in the Middle East could not produce results without the willingness of the parties directly concerned. Hence, the events of the second phase of the Jarring mission demonstrate both the increased US activity in the Middle East as a result of the State Department initiatives in the American Middle East policy, but also State Department's inadequacy to make its views heard at the White House.¹⁸ This chapter explores how this tension affected the outcome of the Jarring mission.

¹⁵ The oil issue was generally not seen as related to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Arabs were not believed to have a serious military option. Quandt, 1993: p.71.

¹⁶ Quandt, 1993: pp.65-74

¹⁷ Hoff, 1994: pp.252-259; Kissinger, 1979: p.377

¹⁸ See also Chapter 4: pp.79-81 and 85-88

Initial Stumbling Blocks

On 7 August, 1970, the Rogers plan cease-fire came into effect, reactivating the Jarring mission.¹⁹ A few days later Jarring invited the foreign ministers of Israel, Jordan and Egypt to New York for opening talks. Israel, Jordan and Egypt, however, would only send their UN ambassadors. This indicates that the three countries were not prepared to make a strong bid for the Jarring mission this time around, and may be seen as intent to undermine Gunnar Jarring's authority. This must have been frustrating for Jarring. He knew from experience that the UN ambassadors did not possess a satisfactory level of authority. The UN delegations were not designated especially to the Jarring talks. They had numerous additional tasks and barely put on their "Jarring-talk hats" long enough and generally met only briefly with Jarring before resuming their ordinary UN roles.²⁰ However, Gunnar Jarring could not force any of the countries to send their foreign ministers. On 25 August 1970 the UN delegates Yosef Tekoah from Israel, Abdul Hamid Sharaf from Jordan, and Mohammed H el-Zayyat from Egypt began separate discussions with Jarring in New York.²¹

However, more problems were looming on the horizon. The Jarring talks were interrupted shortly after they were resumed. Almost immediately after the cease-fire came into force, Egypt, with the help of Soviet personnel, moved new missile installations into the vicinity of the Suez Canal. Israel accused Egypt of violating the cease-fire agreement of 19 June 1970, but Egypt denied the Israeli accusations and claimed that the Israeli objective was to find a reason to withdraw from the talks under Jarring. Egypt also held that the cease-fire agreement was vague as to what actions were prohibited by the standstill commitment. According to Egypt's interpretation, Israel accused Egypt of violation before it was clear what the parties understood by a cease-fire.²² However, the wording of the resolution seems rather clear, and that there was in fact an Egyptian violation of the cease-fire.²³ It took quite some time before it was proved that the missile systems had in fact been moved. It took Washington three weeks to confirm the Israeli allegation that Egypt was moving missiles in violation of the cease-fire agreement.²⁴ For a while, only Israeli intelligence submitted to

¹⁹ Eban, 1977: p.468; Kissinger, 1979: p.585; Rubinstein, 1977: p.121; Thant, 1978: p.339

²⁰ NA, box 2071, 22 December 1971: circular from the Secretary to Amman, Cairo, Tel Aviv, USUN; NA, box 2071, 29 December 1970: Memorandum from Robert C. Brewster, Dept St, to Henry A. Kissinger, The White House

²¹ NA, box 2068, 25 August 1970: cable from Johnson, St Dept to the White House; Thant, 1978, p.340

²² NA, box 2069, 7 September 1970: cable from Ferguson, Kampala to the Secretary; Eban, 1977: p.469; Kissinger, 1979: pp.585-591; Rafael, 1981: pp.230-231; Rubinstein, 1977: pp.123-125; Thant, 1978: pp.340-341 Touval, 1982: p.156; Van der Linden, 1972: p.76

²³ The provision of the standstill read as follows: "Both sides will refrain from changing the military status quo within zones extending 50 kilometers to the east and the west of the ceasefire line. Neither side will introduce or construct any new military installations in these zones. Activities within the zones will be limited to the maintenance of existing installations at their present sites and positions and to the rotation and supply of forces presently within the zones." UN document, 7 August 1970: "Ceasefire agreement/Rogers Plan B - Text/Non-UN document", (<http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf>, 31 January 2007)

²⁴ Rafael, 1981: p.230

the UN confirmed the Egyptian violation. This uncertainty opened the question to controversy, and provided Egypt with a strong case. Many, perhaps including Jarring, did not believe the Israeli accusations for weeks.

On 6 September, less than two weeks after the Jarring talks had reopened, Israel decided to pull out of the Jarring talks until the missile crisis had been satisfactorily resolved.²⁵ The Israeli move started a discussion in the UN. Only the US supported the Israeli refusal to resume the Jarring mission in the UN, and on 4 November, the General Assembly voted for the unconditional resumption of the Jarring talks.²⁶ As a result of the controversy, word against word, Soviet military supply to Egypt increased, and likewise American aid to Israel, during the following months.²⁷

Later the same month, developments in the Middle East provided further obstacles. The death of President Nasser in Egypt and the outbreak of civil war in Jordan added to the snags of resuming the Jarring talks, and made it even more difficult to hold any meetings. By the end of September 1970, the parties were definitively at a new deadlock.²⁸

The immediate interruption of the talks, before they had even begun, frustrated Jarring, who grew increasingly dismayed by his “long and useless vigil in New York.”²⁹ The American UN ambassador, Charles Yost, reported to the US Secretary of State that he had “never seen Jarring so fed up, frustrated or bitter.”³⁰ Yost found that Jarring was “unfortunately coming to blame most of his woes on [the] Israelis.”³¹ It seems that Jarring held the Israeli actions to be more aggravating to the peace process than the movement of the Egyptian missile systems. Jarring was angered by the fact that Israel refused to talk with him. He possibly thought that the Israelis were quibbling over the missile controversy with the aim of letting time pass and retaining the status quo for as long as possible. Jarring used a Chinese saying to describe how he felt he was treated by the Israelis: He said he was “made to eat dirt”.³² The nail in the coffin for him had been a speech Golda Meir held in the Knesset in mid-September where she indirectly stated that the negotiations would not be resumed for some considerable time.³³ Perhaps he felt he was being completely ignored and undermined by the Israelis.

²⁵ NA, box 2069, 7 September 1970: cable from Ferguson, Kampala to the Secretary; Eban, 1977: p.469; Kissinger, 1979: pp.585-591; Rafael, 1981: pp.230-231; Rubinstein, 1977: pp.123-125; Thant, 1978: pp.340-341 Touval, 1982: p.156

²⁶ Eban, 1977: p.470; see General Assembly Resolution 2628, UN Document, A/Res 2628, 4 November 1970 (<http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf>, 31 January 2007)

²⁷ Brecher, 1974: p.459; Van der Linden, 1972: p.76

²⁸ See chapter 4 for further information.

²⁹ NA, box 2070, 16 November 1970: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

³⁰ NA, box 2070, 16 November 1970: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

³¹ NA, box 2070, 16 November 1970: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

³² NA, box 2070, 16 November 1970: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

³³ NA, box 2070, 16 November 1970: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

As a result of these frustrations, Jarring decided to return to Moscow immediately, hoping that his departure might build up pressure for resumption of the talks.³⁴ The American UN ambassador Yost held that Jarring's mood and opinions "hardly seems [like a] propitious state of mind for [Israel] to foster in one who will be playing [the] mayor role in eventual negotiations."³⁵ The State Department was annoyed with Israel's delay of the Jarring talks but "the White House displayed no impatience with Israel. [...] On the contrary, the atmosphere there remained cordial and sympathetic."³⁶ Nothing was done actively from the US to alter Israel's stance. The Israeli lack of concern that they might alienate the mediator leads one to question whether Israel actually intended to engage in real negotiations at any point, at least through the UN.

The Final Resumption

Jarring was due to report to the Secretary General about the state of affairs of the mission in January 1971. Egypt claimed that the Israeli tactics were to stall the reopening of the mission for as long as possible, and then to enter the talks just in time to avoid being left with the full blame for the stalemate in Jarring's report.³⁷ The Egyptian prediction may have been accurate, because in late December 1970, shortly before Jarring sent his report to U Thant, Israel decided to resume the talks once more. Almost four months had passed since their suspension of the talks.³⁸ The Israelis waited as long as possible to restart the Jarring mission. This was in keeping with Israel's tactic of delaying the Jarring talks as long as possible without ending them. A probable aim for the Israeli tactics would be to gain more time to create facts on the ground in order to further secure the occupied areas.

Although it is doubtful that the timing of the resumption was coincidental, the postponement of the decision did not result solely from tactical considerations. The matters implicit in the Jarring mission caused serious divisions within the Israeli leadership and in the Knesset. The diverging positions within the Israeli national unity government made any fundamental policy decisions towards the peace effort very difficult.³⁹ The Israel Labour Party had, upon its election in 1969, formulated a political platform which indicated that Israel would retain sovereignty over Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and Sharm el-Sheikh. The Jordan River was to be Israel's security frontier. The bulk of the nationalist Right thought this to be insufficient, while certain Left-socialists

³⁴ NA, box 2070, 16 November 1970: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

³⁵ NA, box 2070, 16 November 1970: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

³⁶ Rabin, 1979: pp.190-191

³⁷ NA, box 2069, 25 November 1970: cable from Bergus, Cairo to the Secretary

³⁸ NA, box 2071, 29 December 1970: Memorandum from Brewster, Dept St, to Kissinger, The White House; Rafael, 1981: pp.231, 252-253; Shlaim, 2001: p.299; Thant, 1978: p.346; Touval, 1982: p.156

³⁹ See chapter 4: pp.68-71

urged extensive concessions in return for a genuine peace agreement. Within the national unity government these two extremes competed for support.⁴⁰ Any deviation from the platform was as a result difficult to defend. The decision to resume the talks thus ended an agonizing period of decision-making for Israel.⁴¹

The Israeli resumption of the talks may also have been triggered by an American stimulus. According to the President's security advisor, Henry Kissinger, Nixon sent a reassuring letter to Golda Meir in early December 1970, encouraging her to resume the talks.⁴²

At Israel's request, Jarring boarded his plane for Jerusalem on 7 January 1971. However, the new start did not seem to create any optimism for the mission in any quarter. When the resumption of the talks was announced, the *London Times* reported that "today the mood, both inside and outside the Middle East, is wholly pessimistic. [...] It must of course be hoped that this winter pessimism is as poor a guide to the future as the summer optimism proved to be."⁴³ Jarring's trusted associate at the UN, Undersecretary General, Brian Urquhart, described Jarring's mood as bleak and bitter upon departure.⁴⁴ Jarring had told Urquhart that he did not expect Israel to give him anything substantial. Israel claimed it was ready to carry out Resolution 242, but its actions demonstrated that it did not respect the principle of non-acquisition of territory by force. Jarring was in addition still upset with Golda Meir's speech.⁴⁵ In the speech she had referred to the discussions under Jarring's auspices as "senseless" just as he prepared to come to Jerusalem at Israel's request.⁴⁶

Certain features were slightly altered when the curtain went up for the last act of the Jarring mission. For this round of talks, the Jarring mission was expanded with the introduction of a second political officer – an expert on refugees, and a legal officer. The issue of refugees had until this point only been discussed as a humanitarian problem in the UN, not as a political concern as referred to in Resolution 242.⁴⁷ When the issue was treated more seriously during the 1970 fall meeting of the UN General Assembly, shortly before the Jarring mission was resumed, the question of how to deal with

⁴⁰ Brecher, 1974: pp.459-460

⁴¹ NA, box 2071, 29 December 1970: Memorandum from Brewster, Dept St, to Kissinger, The White House; Shlaim, 2001: p.299; Thant, 1978: p.346; Touval, 1982: p.156

⁴² Kissinger, 1979: p.1277

⁴³ UNA, S-0353-3-9: "Dr. Jarring has a last faint chance" in *London Times*, 30 December 1970.

⁴⁴ At the UN, Jarring cooperated closely particularly with U Thant and Brian Urquhart. As Undersecretary General, Urquhart's main functions were the direction of peace-keeping forces in the Middle East and Cyprus, and negotiations in these two areas. His main fields of interest and operation at the UN were conflict resolution and peacekeeping. Urquhart was Jarring's superior officer, advisor and confidant.

⁴⁵ See p.92

⁴⁶ NA, box 2071, 7 January 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

⁴⁷ "The security Council [...] affirms further the necessity [...] for achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem." Security Council Resolution 242

the refugees grew increasingly more important.⁴⁸ This was also the background for the extension of the staff of the Jarring mission.⁴⁹

In addition, Jarring at this point put primary emphasis on a solution between Egypt and Israel, since he did not believe that Jordan would be capable of making peace with Israel without Egypt. A peace treaty between Jordan and Israel was thus put on the back burner.⁵⁰ This may be termed a step-by step approach: Jarring was first aiming at an agreement between Egypt and Israel, then between Jordan and Israel.

The Essentials of Peace

Jarring arrived in Jerusalem and held meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir and Foreign Minister Abba Eban on 8 and 9 January. In Jerusalem, Jarring received a paper from Meir and Eban called the “essentials of peace”.⁵¹ The paper listed the indispensable elements, or essentials, without which Israel could not regard a situation as a state of peace. Israel claimed it was ready to transmit to Egypt and Jordan separate proposals for the conclusion of peace treaties if the two countries demonstrated that they seriously contemplated peace with Israel under the terms listed in the “essentials of peace”. The paper also declared an Israeli willingness to withdraw its forces to secure and recognized boundaries if the same stipulations were met.⁵²

It is possible to argue that the paper represented an Israeli concession, because in “the essentials of peace” Israel for the first time openly used the word withdrawal in a document.⁵³ However, through Rogers II Israel had already accepted the notion of withdrawal from occupied territories through Resolution 242. The “essentials of peace” did not specify which territories the

⁴⁸ See General Assembly Resolution 2649, 30 November 1970: “*The General Assembly [...] Considers that the acquisition and retention of territory in contravention of the right of the people of that territory to self-determination is inadmissible and a gross violation of the Charter; [...] Condemns those Governments that deny the right to self-determination of peoples recognized as being entitled to it, especially of the peoples of southern Africa and Palestine.*”

⁴⁹ Interview with Göran Berg, 7 December 2006

⁵⁰ NA box 1813, 11 October 1968: cable from the Secretary to Beirut

⁵¹ “Peace involves amongst other things: 1. The declared and explicit decision to regard the conflict as finally terminated. 2. Respect and acknowledgement by the parties in explicit terms of each other’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. 3. Establishment of secure, recognized and agreed boundaries. 4. Other additional arrangements for ensuring security. 5. Withdrawal of military forces from territories lying beyond positions agreed in the peace treaty. 6. The cessation of all states of war and acts of hostility or belligerency. 7. The responsibility for ensuring that no war-like act, or violence, by any organization, group or individual originates from or is committed in its territory against the population, citizens or property of the other party. 8. All maritime blockade, discrimination or interference are terminated on the conclusion of peace. This obligation is not dependent on anything except the conclusion of the state of war. 9. Provisions laying down the obligations accepted by the parties towards the settlement of the refugee problem, after which neither party shall be under claims from the other inconsistent with its sovereignty. 10. Termination of economic warfare in all its manifestations, including boycott. 11. Non-participation in hostile alliances and the prohibition of stationing of troops of other parties which maintain a state of belligerency against the other. 12. Non-interference in domestic affairs and non-interference in the normal foreign relations of the other party. 13. Peace must be expressed in a binding treaty in accordance with normal law and precedent.” NA, box 2071, 9 January 1971: cable from Barbour, Israel to the Secretary

⁵² NA, box 2071, 9 January 1971: cable from Barbour, Israel to the Secretary

⁵³ Eban, 1978, p.472

Israeli forces would withdraw from, but left the stipulation of borders to peace negotiations. Apart from the actual use of the word *withdrawal*, the Israeli paper contained nothing new. It reiterated the vagueness of Resolution 242 on the territorial issues and repeated the Israeli demand for a peace agreement before anything else.⁵⁴ Israel demanded that secure and recognized boundaries with suitable security arrangements should be agreed upon during negotiations. The Israeli refusal to define what it meant with “secure and recognized boundaries”, or by “suitable security arrangements” might, to some, indicate that Israel actually sought to acquire Egyptian and Jordanian territory as part of a peace agreement.

By defining its “essentials of peace the Israelis may have tried to elicit an Arab commitment to make peace, and may thereby be said to have attempted to stimulate progress in the peace process, although without offering any real concessions. However, it does not seem that the Israelis were looking for any compromises. They were not proffering any evidence of such desire, but they were rather playing the same game as before only in a slightly different guise. To use a word Israel had already accepted in Rogers II, may not be termed an attempt to compromise. Since the “essentials of peace” did not include any new elements, Israel must have assumed, based on experience, that Jordan, and especially Egypt, could not accept the terms as they were stated in the paper. And perhaps this was the exact reaction the Israelis wanted.

The lack of real concessions sorely tried the patience of the Jarring mission. Jarring pressed, without success, the Israelis on the meaning of secure boundaries. He urged the Israelis to change their wording on the issue, because if Israel could add the phrase “insubstantial rectification”, or perhaps only “rectification”, to the notion of secure and recognized boundaries, Jarring thought the Israeli paper might be easier to accept for Jordan and Egypt.⁵⁵ However, Jarring had no such luck. Golda Meir would not budge. Israel could not offer anything more precise on the issue of the boundaries. Golda Meir admitted that as she saw it, there was no such thing as a secure boundary - only security.⁵⁶ She told Jarring that in negotiations with its adversaries, Israel would base its concept of secure boundaries on its past experiences, and its wish not to have similar experiences in the future.⁵⁷ Israel considered that land equalled security. The Israelis would not settle for less territory than it was forced to in order to retain as much security as possible. “How can [Israel] trust [the Arabs]?” Meir asked.⁵⁸ Jarring suggested that international guarantees could be useful to create

⁵⁴ NA, box 2071, 9 January 1971: cable from Barbour, Israel, to the Secretary; NA, box 2071, 13 January 1971: Memorandum from Eloit, Dept St to Henry Kissinger, the White House; NA, box 2071, 15 January 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary; Eban, 1978, p.472; Kissinger, 1979: p.1278

⁵⁵ NA, box 2071, 11 January 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

⁵⁶ NA, box 2071, 11 January 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

⁵⁷ NA, box 2071, 9 January 1971: cable from Barbour, Israel, to the Secretary

⁵⁸ NA, box 2071, 11 January 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

the necessary trust between the parties to enter into a peace treaty. International actors could monitor whether the provisions of a future peace treaty were observed. Meir replied that she had no faith in international guarantees. Israel feared that great power guarantees would substitute binding agreements between the parties to the conflict, and hinder the prospects for the territorial changes Israel envisaged.⁵⁹

The chances of progress of any kind on the Israeli side seemed very slim because of the hopeless contradiction between the Israeli demand for binding peace agreements with the Arabs, and its insistence that the Arabs could not be trusted. The “essentials of peace” fell far short of what Jordan and Egypt sought, but it was rather conciliatory in tone and did not close any doors. Soon, Jarring gave in to the Israeli wish to pass the paper unchanged on to the Arabs and see what questions they might ask in return.⁶⁰ Jarring transmitted the Israeli paper to both Egypt and Jordan although his emphasis was now on the peace process between Israel and Egypt.⁶¹

An Attempt at Moderation

About a week later Egypt delivered its answer to Israel’s paper to Jarring. Jarring’s reaction to the reply from Cairo was that the Egyptian position was “worse than ever”.⁶² The Egyptian paper repeated Egypt’s initial position by stating that Egypt had already accepted UN Resolution 242. Thereby it had made its basic concession, which was a commitment to enter into peace talks. The Egyptian opinion was that the next step was an Israeli implementation of the resolution. Implementation meant total Israeli withdrawal to the pre-June 1967 lines. From the Egyptian point of view, the Jarring negotiations could only be transformed into real negotiations if Israel matched the Arab concession on peace by a corresponding concession on withdrawal.⁶³ The Egyptian message was delivered in a rather offensive language, dismissing the Israeli paper on the grounds that it added no new element to the previous Israeli position. The Egyptians expressed themselves through sentences such as “[the] Israeli aggression must be terminated” and “Israel [must] declare its repudiation of the policy of territorial expansion”. Such phrases would undoubtedly create adverse Israeli reactions.⁶⁴

Egypt was confronted with a new situation following the death of Nasser in September 1970. This may explain the uncooperative answer. Anwar al-Sadat had just come to power in Egypt.

⁵⁹ NA, box 2071, 15 January 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

⁶⁰ NA, box 2071, 9 January 1971: cable from Barbour, Israel, to the Secretary; NA, box 2071, 15 January 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

⁶¹ Kissinger, 1979: pp.1277-1279; Shlaim, 2001: p.299; Touval, 1982: p.157, Quandt, 1977: pp.131, 134

⁶² NA, box 2072, 29 January 1971: cable from Yost, USUN, to the Secretary

⁶³ NA, box 2071, 16 January 1971: cable from the Secretary to Tel Aviv, Amman, Cairo, Beirut, London, Paris, Moscow

⁶⁴ NA, box 2071, 16 January 1971: cable from Yost to the Secretary; NA, box 2071, 20 January 1971: cable from Yost, USUN, to the Secretary; Kissinger, 1979: p.1278

Sadat's presidency would eventually choose a conciliatory line towards Israel, but this was yet to come. Sadat's conciliatory line is said, as we have seen, to have begun first after Sadat's so called Corrective Revolution in May 1971, which happened after Jarring left the Middle East. During the first months in power, Sadat held to a hard line towards the question of peace with Israel. This was a matter of building himself up as a leader domestically through adopting the policies of Nasser, and at times Sadat even moved further away from reconciliation with the West and Israel than Nasser had done. The hard Egyptian line in January 1971 may therefore in part be explained by a need on part of Sadat to assert that he would safeguard the legacy of Nasser and the radical Arabs.⁶⁵ Whether this was truly his intended policy for the longer term, or merely tactical, really did not matter at the time. Jarring thought the rigid wording in which Egypt had written its letter was an unwise way to forward its message.⁶⁶ He knew that leaving it as it was would provoke an entirely negative Israeli reaction. Jarring therefore decided to take the edge off the letter before delivering it to Israel. Over the following weekend, Jarring worked on restyling the points of the Egyptian answer to make them easier for Israel to swallow. Jarring had shown the Egyptian answer to certain US officials and a few UN officials, and urged these and the Egyptians involved not to transmit the original draft to Israel, and not to leak its contents to the press, nor to anybody else.⁶⁷

Jarring thereby took on the role of a formulator. For the first time he tried to calm the suspicion between the parties to the conflict by directly interfering in their correspondence. He attempted to work his way around the constraining arguments of the adversaries by modifying the sharp edges in their correspondence. However, Jarring did not surpass the barrier of substance, he merely tried to avoid the potential collision points in the correspondence as formulated by the parties. Jarring showed the new draft to the Egyptian UN ambassador el-Zayyat before he handed the answer to Israel. This was strictly in accordance with his cautious manner throughout the mission. Jarring went behind nobody's back, provided no surprises, and thus once more kept his own position clear.

Jarring seems to have been much more persistent when persuading the Egyptians to alter its text, than when attempting to convince Israel to add certain words in its paper. He took the Egyptian paper with him to restyle it by himself, while he only attempted verbal persuasion with Israel. It is hard to fathom why Jarring did not try more decisively to change or emphasise certain points in the Israeli paper considering his effort to alter the Egyptian answer.

⁶⁵ See chapter 4: pp.71-74

⁶⁶ NA, box 2071, 16 January 1971: cable from the Secretary to Tel Aviv, Amman, Cairo, Beirut, London, Paris, Moscow

⁶⁷ NA, box 2071, 15 January 1971: cable from Yost to the Secretary; Kissinger, 1979: p.1278

The Egyptian answer was written in a much more polemical and repetitive manner than the Israeli paper, which was, although not very innovative, written in a rather positive way. The need to soften the language of the paper in order to avoid unnecessary damage to the Jarring mission must have been the primary concern. Jarring was obviously not interested in declaring the mission dead at this point.

In accordance with the temper of its letter, Egypt firmly held that they would not extend the cease-fire beyond the deadline of 5 February unless there was substantial progress toward a settlement and agreement on Israeli withdrawal.⁶⁸ Israel, on the other side, had told Jarring that they would not continue with any progress under an Egyptian ultimatum or any threat linked to the cease-fire deadline on 5 February.⁶⁹ This contradiction threatened a total deadlock. Perhaps Jarring hoped to persuade the Israelis to add the necessary words to their paper if Israel received a forthcoming Egyptian response. This could again lead the Egyptians to prolong the cease-fire beyond 5 February, and thus lengthen the Jarring mission.

It is also very likely that the US supported Jarring's efforts with Egypt more eagerly than his efforts with Israel. The US was anxious to prevent the failure of the Jarring mission. If it was to be suspended, the US would be forced to be more directly and actively involved. However, the Americans tried hard to continue the mission without compromising the interests of its own client state. The US pushed hard to make the Egyptians carry on with the Jarring talks, while the leeway given to Israel was much more extensive. Secretary of State Rogers wrote that

“[the US] have been holding [Egypt's] feet to the fire in hope of bringing Egyptians to something resembling [a] negotiating situation with the Israelis. [...] Negotiations are stalled because [the] Egyptians believe that [the] Israelis hold all the cards. They know that Israel has refused to accept [the] US position on boundaries. [...] [The Egyptians are] preferring [a] suicide course to ceding territory to the Israelis which they see as [the] only outcome of substantive dealings. [...] [The] US have given the Israelis lots of carrots.”⁷⁰

The American efforts eventually paid off. The cease-fire was extended on February 5 for another 30 days until 7 March. The extension took a “tremendous amount of diplomatic activity; it [was] again almost single-handedly a result of US efforts.”⁷¹

Jarring's efforts with the Egyptian document, on the other hand, were not so fortunate. Despite Jarring's advice, Egypt decided to circulate its answer in the UN General Assembly and the

⁶⁸ NA, box 2071, 13 January 1971: Memorandum from Eloit, Dept St, to Henry Kissinger, the White House; NA, box 2072, 30 January 1971: cable from Bergus, Cairo, to the Secretary

⁶⁹ NA, box 2071, 9 January 1971: cable from Barbour, Israel, to the Secretary

⁷⁰ NA, box 2072, 29 January 1971: cable from Rogers to Beirut, London, Moscow, Paris

⁷¹ NA, box 2072, 5 February 1971: memorandum from Rogers to the President

Security Council. The original draft thus appeared in the hands of the Israelis, which invalidated Jarring's revised version.⁷²

Israel kept demanding peace, and Egypt kept demanding withdrawal. Neither side would give any further ground before the other side conceded on substantive issues. However, Egypt had already taken the difficult decision, in Israel's favour, to accept peace, while the Israelis had not yet made the equally difficult decision to withdraw from most of the territories occupied in June 1967. Egypt could not make peace without such promises.

The imbalance in the negotiation process between Israel and Egypt made it difficult to keep it going, because Egypt felt that Israel was holding all the cards, and refusing to play them. The Egyptians believed that negotiations, direct or indirect, would only serve as a forum for formal ratification of the Israeli conquest.⁷³ For this reason Egypt had for some time threatened to call for a Security Council meeting unless Israel was forthcoming on the withdrawal of its forces from occupied territories by late January.⁷⁴ When Egypt decided to circulate the original January document despite Jarring's advice not to do so, it may have been the minimum excuse needed by Egypt at that point: Egypt had reversed its promise to call for a meeting in the Security Council, and instead accepted the advice to extend the cease-fire with Israel by another thirty days, which pointed in the opposite direction. It was therefore necessary for the Egyptians to justify its actions with some unwavering demands to Israel to demonstrate its opposition to Israel's demands. Stating its most extreme position was believed to serve as a substitute for demanding a meeting in the Security Council.⁷⁵ Despite the expansion of the cease-fire, however, there was no progress in the Middle East situation approaching February 1971.

A New Role for Jarring

On 8 February 1971, Jarring presented his own formula for peace between Israel and Egypt.⁷⁶ Undoubtedly, Jarring had expanded his functions as a mediator. For the first time Jarring included issues of substance in a proposal. As a go-between, Jarring until that time had only suggested solutions to matters of procedure.⁷⁷

⁷² NA, box 2072, 12 February 1971: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv, to the Secretary

⁷³ NA, box 2072, 29 January 1971: cable from the Secretary to Beirut, London, Moscow, Paris

⁷⁴ NA, box 2071, 21 January 1971: memorandum from Eloit, Dept St to Kissinger, the White House

⁷⁵ NA, box 2071, 20 January 1971: cable from Yost, USUN, to the Secretary; NA, box 2071, 21 January 1971: cable from Yost, USUN, to the Secretary

⁷⁶ Eban, 1977: pp.472-3; Kissinger, 1979: p.1278; Rabin, 1979: p.192; Shlaim, 2001: p.299; Thant, 1978: p.346; *UN Yearbook*, 1971: p.168

⁷⁷ Jarring believed progress between Israel and Jordan was dependent on Egypt's position towards peace with Israel. He therefore issued a peace plan to Israel and Egypt first, with the intention of following with a similar letter concerning Israel and Jordan at a later stage.

Jarring's Peace Plan

In a letter handed to the UN ambassadors of Israel and Egypt on 8 February 1971, Jarring informed the two countries of what he believed to be the necessary steps to reach a viable settlement in accordance with Resolution 242.⁷⁸ The adversaries' opposing views as to which commitments and undertakings to prioritise were serious obstacles to progress. The Israelis were waiting for the Egyptians to spell out the kind of reciprocal peace commitment Israel desired, while the Egyptians were refusing to commit to peace unless and until Israel more precisely spelled out their views on withdrawal and borders. In the letter Jarring explained that he believed that the only possible solution for breaking the deadlock was for both sides to offer simultaneous commitments to the fundamentals that were inevitable for a peace between them.⁷⁹

The letters to Egypt and Israel listed the issues Jarring thought to be the prerequisites for peace between the two countries. Jarring asked Egypt and Israel to make their commitments to these points simultaneously. One side would only be held accountable for its promises on the condition that the other side made the required commitments as well.⁸⁰

From Israel Jarring asked specifically for an assurance that it would withdraw to the borders of the UN partition plan of 1947.⁸¹ This commitment was to be made on the understanding that the borders were subject to practical security arrangements and that Israel would have freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran and the Suez Canal. From Egypt Jarring asked for a commitment to enter into a peace agreement with Israel. The Egyptians were also asked to commit themselves to the provisos concerning navigation and borders. All states of belligerency should be renounced and Egypt was asked to do all in its power to prevent hostile acts against Israel from Egyptian territory.⁸²

One reason for the decision to make such a proposal at this point may have been the fact that Jarring and his crew were exhausted by the extensive travelling and the lack of significant progress. The Jarring mission had probably lost faith in its former approach, and faced with the prospect of achieving no progress at all, they decided to make one last attempt, of a different character. This would provide Jarring with either a good reason to continue his mission or a reason to pull out.

The decision to enter into issues of substance, however, does not fit well with the approach taken by Jarring in the first phase of his mission. As we have seen, Jarring had been very reluctant all

⁷⁸ NA, box 2072, 16 February 1971: cable from Sisco, Dept St to the Secretary, Rafael, 1981: p.255

⁷⁹ NA, box 2072, 16 February 1971: cable from Sisco, Dept St to the Secretary, Rafael, 1981: p.255

⁸⁰ NA, box 2072, 13 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN, to the Secretary; NA, box 2072, 16 February 1971: cable from Sisco, Dept St to the Secretary

⁸¹ See map p.129 and chapter 2: p.17

⁸² NA, box 2072, 16 February 1971: cable from Sisco, Dept St to the Secretary; Kissinger, 1979: p.1278; Neff, 1988: p.46; Rabin, 1979: p.192; Shlaim, 2001: p. 299; Thant, 1978: p.246; *UN Yearbook*, 1971: p.168

along to present any proposals that might provoke irrevocable damage and thus risk his position with the parties.⁸³ That “Ambassador Jarring plunge into a new initiative, without giving the parties prior notification, was an astounding feat for a diplomat who was as cautious as he was.”⁸⁴ Although it might be natural in a mediation process that the functions of the third party evolve and expand, the decision to pass on a peace plan was not his independent choice. Jarring had strong reservations against taking such a step, and he believed that the mission would be brought to an end if he presented a comprehensive peace plan. The change of approach of the Jarring mission was to a large degree influenced by American lobbying.⁸⁵

Officials of the State Department had long been less than content with the way Jarring handled his mission.⁸⁶ It was thought that he needed to be much more active in the negotiation process than had been the case. During January 1971 the State Department increasingly urged Jarring to forward an independent suggestion or an idea for a peace plan to the adversaries. “This is the time for UN statesmanship and initiative, and [the US] hope that [it is] possible to break down [the] chronic UN tendency not to stick its neck out in a positive way.”⁸⁷ It was generally the American UN ambassador Charles Yost who saw Jarring and conveyed the views of the US, and it was he, on behalf of the State Department, that urged Jarring to submit his own suggestions to the parties.⁸⁸ Jarring was told by the US that if he did not take an independent initiative, it was extremely unlikely that either side would move significantly from their present positions. Secretary of State William Rogers encouraged those in contact with Jarring to make a major effort to convince him that he was in a position to pre-empt the situation. He argued that the parties would not be able to challenge Jarring on this matter since they were already committed through Rogers II to accept whatever procedures Jarring would lay down.⁸⁹ Jarring was encouraged by American assurances that if he did take action, they would be as helpful as they could be with both sides in order to promote progress on his proposal.⁹⁰

Jarring was reluctant to propose a peace plan of his own.⁹¹ He was worried that if he submitted a proposal it would terminate his mission. It was unlikely that he would be able to elicit positive answers from both sides. Israel had warned him repeatedly that he should not deal with

⁸³ See Chapter 3

⁸⁴ Rafael, 1981: p.254

⁸⁵ NA, box 2072, 3 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

⁸⁶ See Chapter 3

⁸⁷ NA, box 2071, 21 January 1971: cable from the Secretary to Yost, USUN; Rafael, 1981: pp.254-255

⁸⁸ NA, box 2072, 3 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN, to the Secretary

⁸⁹ NA, box 2071, 21 January 1971: cable from the Secretary to Yost, USUN; NA, box 2072, 29 January 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary; Kissinger, 1979: p.1278

⁹⁰ NA, box 2072, 3 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN, to the Secretary; NA, box 2072, 5 February 1971, memorandum from the Secretary to the President

⁹¹ NA, box 2072, 3 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

issues of substance. Such questions would be treated by the parties to the conflict in direct negotiations. However, Jarring was equally convinced that if he did not take a “concrete and forthcoming position” on the Egyptian-Israeli border before the end of February, the talks would break down anyway by the beginning of March the same year.⁹² As a result of this difficult situation, Jarring accepted the American advice, in cooperation with U Thant, and decided to outline a peace plan for the adversaries. However, the contents of the plan Jarring presented to the parties does not seem to have been influenced by the US, but was based, at least largely, on his own ideas.⁹³

Aware of his own limitations with regard to persuasion and coercion, Jarring told the US that he would need strong US support to obtain an Israeli acceptance of the paper he was about to submit. Jarring urged the US to start encouraging the Israelis in New York, Washington and Jerusalem immediately to take a concrete and forthcoming position on the border issue. American UN Ambassador Yost affirmed that the US would be as helpful to Jarring as they could with both sides.⁹⁴ Jarring and his mission staff might thus have been led to believe that the US would back his initiative actively and put pressure on the adversaries to accept the proposal.⁹⁵ This might have tipped the scales for Jarring when he opted to present an independent proposal.

The 8 February proposal was built upon statements given by the parties to the conflict throughout the Jarring mission up to this point. Overall, Jarring’s plan provided a solution that implicitly gave Israel all that it had publicly been seeking, namely peace and secure borders, which implied minor adjustments of the 1967 lines, the use of the Suez Canal and the unhindered passage through the Straits of Tiran. However, Jarring’s peace plan did not allow for the continued Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, Sharm el-Sheikh on the Sinai Peninsula, or the West Bank. Jarring did not accept any territorial ambitions on Israel’s part. The proposal therefore also responded to the Egyptian demands, as it called for an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967-lines. Jarring’s proposal was further in keeping with Public International Law. Jarring himself stated in this connection that “it is a basic point in the UN Charter, that you cannot take away territory from another member state.”⁹⁶ The UN Charter is part of International Law, and binding for the member states of the UN. Further, “it was [...] an unavoidable thing [for Jarring] to include withdrawal because Resolution 242 speaks of the inadmissibility of acquiring territory by force”.⁹⁷ Under the UN Charter, Security Council Resolutions are a part of the regulations the member states are

⁹² NA, box 2072, 3 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

⁹³ NA, box 2072, 5 February 1971: memorandum from the Secretary to the President

⁹⁴ NA, box 2072, 3 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN, to the Secretary

⁹⁵ NA, box 2072, 9 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

⁹⁶ “All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state”, The UN Charter, Article 2, Paragraph 4; UNOrHist: Krasno, 1990: p.18

⁹⁷ UNOrHist: Krasno, 1990: p.18; UN Security Council Resolution 242, 22 November 1967

committed to follow.⁹⁸ Jarring's peace plan was accordingly strictly in line with the guidelines given by provisions of international law.

The proposal may also be seen as Jarring's personal preference on how the conflict should be solved. He must have foreseen that the proposal in all likelihood would not be acceptable to Israel without heavy handed external pressure, however, he was apparently not willing to propose a peace plan that gave in to the Israeli demand that Egypt make peace on Israel's terms. Such peace would imply a full contractual peace without concomitant full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. Jarring obviously tried to create a proposal that followed his reading of Resolution 242, and one that would be acceptable to Egypt. Further he must have hoped that the US would provide sufficient assistance to push Israel into accepting the peace plan too. Jarring might have thought that this approach represented the only way to produce a breakthrough. All he could realistically do at this stage was to hope for the best.

"A non-starter of a crash landing"

The initial reactions of both Israel and Egypt to Jarring's peace plan were distinctly negative. The Israelis were strongly opposed to him dealing with matters of substance. The Egyptians argued that Jarring should not have given the impression that there was agreement between the two sides, because this could imply that a peace accord was impending. Egypt's UN Ambassador Mohammed H el-Zayyat had further objected to what he referred to as "American language" in Jarring's paper, particularly in connection with withdrawal. This was a not so subtle allegation that Jarring's proposal was too pro-Israeli. Specifically, El-Zayyat claimed that the sentence concerning practical security arrangements in the Sharm el-Sheikh area entailed that Israeli troops would be allowed to be stationed there. The letter was not acceptable to Egypt also because Jarring did not call specifically upon Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territory, meaning the West Bank and the Golan Heights. An Egyptian acceptance of Jarring's peace plan would in that case imply that Egypt compromised the unity of the Arab countries.⁹⁹ Seeing as Jarring's plan lay especially close to Egyptian demands, the Egypt's objections were probably an attempt to calm suspicions domestically and in other Arab countries, and to making Jarring's plan as favourable to Egypt as possible.

The Egyptian protests about the Sharm el-Sheikh area were silenced when Jarring agreed to insert a footnote to the paper. The footnote explained Jarring's intention with the sentence concerning "practical security arrangements". It clarified that Israel would be guaranteed freedom of

⁹⁸ See the UN Charter; see http://www.fn.no/temasider/fred_og_sikkerhet/internasjonal_rett/hva_er_folkerett (19 April 2007).

⁹⁹ NA, box 2072, 9 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

navigation through the Straits of Tiran by the stationing of a UN force in the area for this purpose. Jarring also explained to el-Zayyat that the reason why Jarring could not call for Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories was that the proposal presented by Jarring on 8 February 1971 only concerned Egypt and Israel. Separate agreements would have to be made later with the other Arab states.¹⁰⁰

The Israelis were shocked and furious at Jarring's proposal, and not least by the fact that he had not consulted Israel before submitting it. It represented a significant departure from his former procedure. About a week after the proposal was delivered to the Israeli UN ambassador, Jarring met with Ambassador Yosef Tekoah, who spent two hours protesting strongly against Jarring's proposal. He urged Jarring to withdraw it, and to concentrate on acquiring responses from Jordan and Egypt to the Israeli "essentials of peace" instead.¹⁰¹

The main Israeli objection to Jarring's peace plan was that Jarring was seen as operating outside his mandate by proposing a peace plan of his own. Israel held that Jarring's mandate simply allowed him to recommend the procedures, places and times for discussions between the adversaries. Foreign minister Abba Eban asked "Where do you find anything saying Jarring is authorized to set out territorial plans?"¹⁰² Israel wanted to keep the option of retaining at least Sharm el-Sheikh in a peace settlement and, if it could not have both, it would not be persuaded that peace without Sharm el-Sheikh was worth the cost. Israel considered its bargaining strength to reside primarily in its physical presence in the occupied areas.¹⁰³ Israel would not allow Jarring to define positions on the most important issue for Israel, namely its boundaries, and articulated that Jarring had destroyed the whole concept of negotiations when he had excluded the parties to the conflict from the decision making process. Israel therefore could not give Jarring any of the commitments he asked for. Golda Meir said that Jarring had suddenly done what Israel for three years had been trying not to do, that was drawing a detailed map for Egypt.¹⁰⁴

Israel also objected to the asymmetry of Jarring's proposal. Egypt was called upon to do something, but this was not comparable to what was asked of the Israelis. Golda Meir held that until Egypt was prepared to make unconditional peace with Israel under any circumstances, without the preconditions present in Jarring's plan, Israel would not take one single step towards peace. Meir

¹⁰⁰ NA, box 2072, 9 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

¹⁰¹ NA, box 2072, 13 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN, to the Secretary

¹⁰² NA, box 2072, 9 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary; NA, box 2072, 12 February 1971: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv, to the Secretary; NA, box 2072, 13 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN, to the Secretary

¹⁰³ NA, box 2072, 16 February 1971: cable from Sisco, Dept St, to the Secretary

¹⁰⁴ NA, box 2072, 9 February 1971: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv, to the Secretary; NA, box 2072, 12 February 1971: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv, to the Secretary

said she was sorry if Israeli and Egyptian boys had to pay for this with their lives, but if this was what President Sadat wanted, that was what he would get.¹⁰⁵

The Israeli objections to Jarring's proposal implied that the Israelis were unwilling to give up the territories they occupied in 1967. They must have felt that Jarring had written the missing definite article *the*, or the pronoun *all* in connection with territories into Resolution 242, and that Jarring now precluded the ambiguity of the resolution and called for the total withdrawal of the Israeli forces from all the occupied territories.¹⁰⁶ Israel would thereby be prevented from keeping the Egyptian territory.

Jarring was disturbed and annoyed by Israel's strong attack.¹⁰⁷ In a conversation with the Israeli UN ambassador Tekoah, he held that he had not drawn any maps, nor set any boundaries. The drawing of the exact lines would be decided in negotiations between the parties. Jarring merely attempted to help the parties get around the deadlock into which the negotiations had moved. If this was not circumvented, it would prevent further progress. This was in accordance with his mandate, and he considered this to be to promote agreement.¹⁰⁸ If Israel believed that he was exceeding his mandate, Jarring said he would have to reflect very seriously as to whether his mission was useful any longer.¹⁰⁹ This was a threat to discontinue unless Israel allowed him the authority and the scope of the mandate he had claimed by forwarding his peace plan.

The State Department supported the Jarring mission, and held that Jarring did not exceed his mandate. Under Resolution 242 and the Rogers II initiative, Jarring was supposed to get the parties to the conflict together, according to such procedures, times and places as he might recommend.¹¹⁰ It is possible that the State Department believed that the US would provide Jarring with the necessary assistance to make a breakthrough. Assistant Secretary of State, Joseph Sisco, said to the Israelis that he was struck by the fact that what Israel had always said they needed was incorporated in Jarring's document.¹¹¹ Sisco agreed with the Israeli claim that the proposal did not represent total symmetry between the two parties to the conflict. However, it represented the kind of reciprocal peace commitment Israel was looking for. For the first time, Jarring had made a proposal that did not require a third party, but one that required a reciprocal agreement between the parties, Sisco said.¹¹²

¹⁰⁵ NA, box 2072, 12 February 1971: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv, to the Secretary

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter 2: pp.23-26

¹⁰⁷ NA, box 2072, 13 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

¹⁰⁸ NA, box 2072, 12 February 1971: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv, to the Secretary

¹⁰⁹ NA, box 2072, 13 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN to the Secretary

¹¹⁰ NA, box 2072, 12 February 1971: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv, to the Secretary

¹¹¹ Joseph Sisco, the assistant secretary of state for the Near East and South East Asia, was a Democrat with a long career in the State Department. However, he had never served overseas, and his knowledge of the Middle East came from his years in Washington. Quandt, 1993: pp.67-68.

¹¹² NA, box 2072, 14 February 1971: cable from Irwin, Dept St, to Barbour, Tel Aviv

The State Department claimed it did not accept Israelis territorial ambitions, and that it seemed unnecessary for Israel to keep the Sinai desert. “What the hell does *that* do for the Israelis’ security?” Secretary of State Rogers asked.¹¹³

Israel was shocked by the State Department’s support for Jarring’s proposal.¹¹⁴ They perceived that the Americans had promised Israel absolute freedom to conduct its own discussions if it returned to the Jarring talks, but now they interfered. However, the State Department’s support for the Jarring plan did not represent the prevailing view in the whole US administration. Accordingly, no pressure was put on Israel to accept anything. Nonetheless, the Americans and Israelis decided together that it would not be wise for Israel to give an immediate negative answer. Israel agreed to wait and see how Egypt responded to Jarring’s proposal. Hopefully, Israel would be let off the hook by a negative response from Egypt. The Israelis thought Jarring had jumped the gun on Egypt as well, and that the commitments he asked from the Egyptians were too fundamental for them to be able to respond in the affirmative. Thus, the Israelis thought the chances were good for Israel to make an easy escape. The lack of faith in the Jarring plan led Eban to call it “a non-starter of a crash landing” and “an act of unwisdom”.¹¹⁵

Commitment and Evasion

On 15 February 1971 Egypt handed Jarring its answer to the 8 February peace plan. It was without reservation positive on all the points listed in the proposal. Jarring was observed to be cheerful upon receiving the Egyptian answer.¹¹⁶ For the first time in 23 years Egypt openly agreed to commit to a peace agreement with Israel, on the condition that Israel would return to the 1967 borders with only minor alterations as a result of security arrangements.¹¹⁷ There was, however fierce opposition within the Egyptian foreign ministry and in other elements of the Egyptian government to the acceptance of Jarring’s peace plan. Agreeing positively to talk directly to Israel was such a difficult move for Egypt that if Israel did not give a positive reply to this initiative, the internal disagreement in Egypt made it nearly impossible for Egypt to keep the Jarring talks going any longer. The fighting would be resumed even if the odds were against the

¹¹³ Van der Linden, 1972: p.74

¹¹⁴ NA, box 2072, 9 February 1971: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv, to the Secretary; NA, box 2072, 12 February 1971: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv, to the Secretary

¹¹⁵ NA, box 2072, 9 February 1971: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv, to the Secretary; NA, box 2072, 12 February 1971: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv, to the Secretary

¹¹⁶ NA, box 2072, 16 February 1971: cable from the Secretary to Stockholm

¹¹⁷ NA, box 2072, 16 February 1971: cable from Sisco, Dept St, to the Secretary; Kissinger, 1979: p.1279; Shlaim, 2001: p.300; Thant, 1978: p.347

Egyptians. The American envoy to Cairo, Donald C. Bergus, observed that Egypt would prefer destruction to surrendering.¹¹⁸

The most important implication of the Egyptian reply was that Israel now had a partner for peace negotiations. Israel's primary objection to peace with the Arab countries was neutralized, because there was now somebody to talk to. A negative Israeli response would mean that Israel would be blamed if the talks broke down. Since Jarring had no means of power at his disposal, Jarring and his entourage could only hope that Israel would not risk being held responsible for failing the Jarring mission, and straining their relations with the UN, and that this would favour an Israeli agreement to settle the conflict. This was not a very probable outcome. However, it is possible that Jarring and his colleagues hoped for strong-arming or bribing help from the US. This could be a promise to deliver some kind of side payments or to withhold resources from Israel in order to raise the value of a settlement and push the Israelis into accepting the 8 February proposal.

At first glance it is hard to see why Egypt answered positively to the 8 February proposal when it did not allow for Jarring to even take the edge off a fairly uncompromising document forwarded in January. However, Jarring's plan yielded to Egypt nearly everything it had asked for. It would be difficult to turn down such an opportunity to retrieve the territories occupied by Israel in June 1967. In addition, it is plausible that the Egyptians were convinced that Israel would not accept Jarring's plan. Egypt could accordingly accept the proposal without running the risk of actually entering into direct negotiations with Israel. To accept Jarring's initiative would instead place Egypt in a favourable light, because they were not the party to impede progress. At best, a positive answer might even produce a commitment by the superpowers to lean on Israel to give up territory. Both parties were thus playing the same game of shifting the blame to the other side.

By the middle of February, Jarring had not yet passed on the Egyptian reply to Israel. He was unsure whether delivering the Egyptian answer to Israel before Israel had provided an answer, would be agreeing with the "simultaneity" and "parallelism" he had espoused in his letter of 8 February 1971. After thorough considerations, on 17 February Jarring decided to pass the Egyptian reply to the Israeli UN ambassador Tekoah in New York.¹¹⁹ However, he pledged to Egypt that if Israel replied negatively, the Egyptian acceptance would be nullified. Consistent with the wording of Jarring's peace plan, an answer would be binding only if the plan was accepted by both sides. Jarring said his worst fear at the moment of passing the Egyptian answer on to Israel was that the Israelis would ignore his paper completely, and address its next communication directly to the Egyptian

¹¹⁸ NA, box 2072, 16 February 1971: cable from Bergus, Cairo, to the Secretary; NA, box 2072, 16 February 1971: cable from the Secretary to Stockholm

¹¹⁹ NA, box 2072, 17 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN, to the Secretary

response. Such a turn would be very embarrassing for him personally, because his authority would be undermined. It would also put him in an impossible position vis-à-vis Egypt, as he had promised that their answer would not have any consequences unless Jarring's plan was accepted by both sides.¹²⁰

The positive Egyptian answer to Jarring's plan set off intense activity in the US. There was strong disagreement within the administration on which approach to pursue. The question was whether to put pressure on Israel to accept Jarring's peace plan, or to await the situation further. The American strategy had until this point been to leave it to Israel to make its own decisions.¹²¹ Now the Americans had to decide whether they should stick with their former strategy or alter it. At the State Department three alternative policy scenarios regarding if and how to influence Israel were considered. US behaviour towards Israel could be based on diplomatic arguments and inducements of a material and financial nature. Another option was to use coercive means, such as withholding material and financial support, or briefing members of Congress, the press and the American Jewish community about Israel's inflexibility. A third possibility was to combine the two approaches mentioned above. This would basically mean being less helpful and less efficient in matters concerning arms and economic aid.¹²²

The main questions were whether inducements alone would be enough to persuade Israel that a settlement with Egypt was the preferable option, and whether the Americans were willing to risk a strained relationship with Israel by using more coercive means. One problem was that the Americans had already provided so many inducements to Israel in other contexts that their effect tended to decline. Israel was well equipped with arms and seemed confident of continued financial support from the US Congress and the American Jewish community.¹²³ There was a good chance that Israel felt strong enough to bear the consequences of not accepting the Jarring plan on its own shoulders, and that it would prefer to ride out the storm alone, rather than to compromise what Israel considered its negotiating position and its security.

There is no evidence of any American assistance to the Jarring mission at this point. The US had previously persuaded Jarring to present an individual proposal. When Jarring finally followed their advice and Egypt in fact gave a positive answer, the Americans failed to pressure its ally into accepting it. The coercive approach was thus regarded as too risky for the Nixon administration compared to the alternative. The activist approach of Nixon's State Department was in decline, and the views of the State Department, inclined to push through the peace plan, were receiving less

¹²⁰ NA, box 2072, 23 February 1971: cable from Yost, USUN, to the Secretary

¹²¹ NA, box 2072, 14 February 1971: memorandum from Eliot, Dept St, to Kissinger, the White House

¹²² NA, box 2072, 14 February 1971: memorandum from Eliot, Dept St, to Kissinger, the White House

¹²³ NA, box 2072, 16 February 1971: cable from Sisco, Dept St, to the Secretary

support than ever from the White House.¹²⁴ By putting pressure on the Israelis, American influence in Israel could be reduced. To lean on Israel could in addition strengthen the hands of the territorial maximalists and the military hawks in Israel, because the latent Israeli fears that it would ultimately have to stand alone would be triggered. There was also a risk of a domestic reaction in the US. Therefore the American approach continued to be one of avoiding confrontation with Israel and Israel's supporters. It was decided that the US should say and do only what was minimally necessary to pretend to continue the talks without applying pressure of any kind on Israel. Israel should be left to come to its own decision.¹²⁵

One could argue that the American decision to remain on the fence can be explained by the incomplete exchange of information between the US and Jarring. Although the decision to pass a proposal to the adversaries was not Jarring's idea, the contents of his proposal were his own. The language used in the 8 February proposal resembles that of which Jarring called his "bible": the first Rogers plan of December 1969.¹²⁶ The US had deviated from the stances of Rogers I when it proposed Rogers II. The first Rogers plan was controversial within the Nixon administration. The American administration broadly may not have been willing to stomach Jarring's plan, and found it far too radical.

Two days after receiving the Egyptian answer, Israel handed Jarring its final reply. Not surprisingly, the scepticism within the Israeli government that the risks of the peace settlement outweighed its blessings won through.¹²⁷ The Israeli answer was not addressed to Jarring, but was a direct response to the Egyptian answer. Israel wrote that it "viewed favourably" the Egyptian readiness to enter into a peace agreement and said it would withdraw from the Israeli-Egyptian "cease-fire line to the secure, recognized boundaries to be established in the peace agreement".¹²⁸ However, Israel would not withdraw to the pre 5 June 1967-lines. Israel instead made what it called an offer to negotiate without prior conditions. However, the refusal to return to the pre-war frontier was in fact a prior condition, seeing as Israel demanded that this demand would have to be met by Egypt should Israel enter into any negotiations.

¹²⁴ See Chapter 4: pp.80-81 and 85-88

¹²⁵ NA, box 2072, 5 February 1971: memorandum from the Secretary to the President; NA, box 2072, 12 February 1971: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv, to the Secretary; NA, box 2072, 19 February 1971: cable from Sisco, Dept St, to Barbour, Tel Aviv; NA, box 2072, 20 February 1971: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv to Sisco, Dept St; NA, box 2072, 28 February 1971: cable from the Secretary to Tel Aviv

¹²⁶ NA, box 2072, 12 February 1971: cable from Barbour, Tel Aviv, to the Secretary

¹²⁷ Rafael, 1981: p.257

¹²⁸ Shlaim, 2001: p.300; Thant, 1978: p.347; Touval, 1982: p.159; *UN Yearbook* 1971: p.168

Jarring did not find the Israeli reply satisfactory, and he would not continue his initiative because Israel did not accept his proposal.¹²⁹ He did not see any point in continuing his mission when the cease-fire between Egypt and Israel expired on 7 March 1971, upon which date Sadat declared that Egypt was no longer committed to the cease-fire. Convinced that the peace talks under his auspices between Israel and Egypt would continue to be deadlocked until Israel agreed to formulate a new position on borders, Jarring left for Moscow on 25 March 1971, where he resumed his post as the Swedish ambassador to the Soviet Union.¹³⁰ Jarring agreed to remain available to resume the mission whenever the Secretary General considered it to be appropriate, but in practice the Jarring mission was terminated upon the suspension of the cease-fire between Israel and Egypt in March 1971.

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Towards the very end of the Jarring mission, the UN Special Representative Gunnar Jarring assumed a new role. For the first time, Jarring broke through the procedural barrier and proposed a solution of the core issues of the conflict between Israel and the Arab states. Jarring's role was significantly affected by the increased degree of American involvement in Middle East diplomacy: His 8 February proposal was put forward to a large degree as a result of State Department lobbying.

The proposal Jarring put forward on 8 February 1971 was not likely to be accepted by Israel. The peace plan lay much closer to the Arab demands than the Israeli: It asked that peace be traded against the withdrawal of Israeli forces to the lines existing before 1967, subject to minor security arrangements. Israel was in other words asked to return virtually all its territorial gains. Jarring must have known that the proposal was likely to be rejected by Israel. However, he evidently proposed a peace plan according to international law, and one that he thought to be fair, and hoped for American pressure on Israel to accept it.

During early stages, the Nixon administration implied willingness to make an effort to move the peace talks along under Jarring's auspices by applying pressure on both parties. But in the end, it was too difficult and risky for the US to push its most important ally in the region into making substantial concessions. The US opinion was eventually that Israel should be left to make its own decisions regarding the Jarring mission. This implies that the US was not willing to put pressure on Israel. In the end, in accordance with what would almost become a regular pattern in later negotiations, the US favoured the Israeli position. As a result, Israel was not persuaded that the

¹²⁹ UNOrHist: Krasno, 1990: pp.16-17; Shlaim, 2001: p.300; Thant, 1978: p.347; Touval, 1982: p.159; *UN Yearbook* 1971: p.168

¹³⁰ Thant, 1978: p.349

benefits of a solution were greater than those of keeping the status quo. Jarring had no leverage to change the realities of the conflict, and he was not provided with stronger weight of influence through the assistance of external powers. Israel was dealing from a position of political and military strength, and even if a meeting had taken place with Jordan and Egypt, Israel would have conceded little or nothing. As a result of the lack of US assistance, Israel did not need to change the status quo. Jarring's peace plan was in turn rejected by the Israelis, which led to the breakdown of the activities of the Jarring mission.

It is not certain, however in retrospect it appears unlikely, that Jarring believed he would receive active American assistance. Jarring must have known that the US was biased in favour of Israel and that it would probably not weigh in on Israel to accept such a controversial plan. Under the circumstances, Jarring and his colleagues must have considered the peace plan to have been the only option. It was a case of sink or swim. Either the US would weigh in on Israel to accept Jarring's proposal, or the Jarring mission would come to an end.

Although Gunnar Jarring dealt with the mission until August 1973, its active stage expired on 25 March 1971, as a result of the negative Israeli answer to the peace plan of 8 February. Jarring kept his position as Special Representative for the UN Secretary General to the Middle East until 11 January 1991, when he handed in his resignation.

Conclusion: Reflections on Power, Peace and Palestine

The outcome of the Jarring mission did not come as a surprise to the small group that had been shuttling between the parties to the conflict. Already at the outset, the members of the Jarring mission came to doubt their potential as peace makers. Two episodes told by Göran Berg, Jarring's assistant, may illustrate the first impressions, and perhaps depressions, of the Jarring mission. On one of their first days in the Middle East, the group constituting the mission sat down for a meal at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. The restaurant manager drew a map of the new Israel on one of the restaurant napkins, which included the Sinai, the West Bank, the Gaza strip and the Golan Heights. These were all of the areas occupied by Israel during the Six-Day War. This incident upset the group because these were the exact questions the Jarring mission had come to the Middle East to discuss. It gave its members a strong hint as to what many Israelis felt should be the outcome already at the turn of the year 1967. Another experience in the early days of the mission reinforced this impression. On a trip by car in the area, the group spotted the very first Israeli settlements. Israeli citizens had spontaneously raised barrack-like buildings inside the occupied areas. Jarring turned towards Göran Berg and said "look, look. This will turn into a disaster."¹

Some three years after these first experiences, the mission was in practice brought to a close, leaving no viable results in the Arab-Israeli conflict. This study has explored the course of the Jarring mission. While doing so, two focal questions have been posed: Firstly, what role did Gunnar Jarring play in the peace process following the Six-Day War in 1967? And secondly, how can the Jarring mission's lack of tangible results be explained?

Jarring has been referred to as merely a mailbox, because he largely transmitted messages and proposals between the parties to the conflict. This indicates that Jarring simply filled the role of a communicator. For the lion's share of the mission, this observation is correct. However, his degree of involvement increased considerably towards its end. Jarring also acted as a formulator: at first by composing possible solutions to procedural matters, and further, at the very end of the mission, Jarring presented to Egypt and Israel his independent peace plan, proposing a solution to substantial issues underlying the conflict. Thereby he finally crossed the barrier of procedural questions and intervened as an active third party to the negotiation process. Although perhaps partly a natural

¹ Interview with Göran Berg, 7 December 2006

development, Jarring's role altered to a large degree as a result of lobbying from the State Department under the Nixon administration.

Various factors may serve to help explaining the failure of the Jarring mission to produce tangible results. This analysis has focused mainly on the impact of contingent and structural factors on the mission's room for manoeuvre. The imbalance of power existing between Israel on the one side and Egypt and Jordan on the other, increased by the Six-Day War, was of crucial importance to the outcome of the Jarring mission. Because of this asymmetry of power, Israel, the stronger party to the conflict, would need to be convinced that the benefits of a solution were greater than those of keeping the status quo. Israel had a clear security agenda, and it was not willing to concede much of the advantages it obtained from the Six-Day War. It seems clear that only an actor of considerable strength, basically a superpower, could alter the imbalance of power existing between Israel on the one side, and Egypt and Jordan on the other.² Without considerable external assistance, Jarring had to rely on his personal skills to see him through the process.

As a weak and unbiased mediator, Gunnar Jarring held very moderate levers of power. As a result, the full range of roles and strategies were therefore not available for him to choose. He was basically not free to choose the strategy and role that he believed to be more effective in the conflict between Israel and the Arab states. As a weak and unbiased mediator, Jarring was well placed to serve as a channel of communication. He was also suited to act as a formulator by attempting to provide innovative thinking in order to try to work a way around the constraining commitments of the adversaries. However, Jarring was not a representative of any greater power, and he could not force through a solution on unwilling parties.³ His lack of muscle thus reduced his influence on the final outcome of the Jarring mission.

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In the following, the Jarring mission will be compared to similar peace efforts in the Middle East. Some third parties in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict have dealt with similar conditions as the Jarring mission, and in spite of this succeeded in bringing about agreements between the adversaries. Therefore, upon lifting the gaze from the particulars of the Jarring mission, one question becomes pressing: Are the theories concerning a weak and unbiased mediator, used as a framework for this thesis, valid tools to apply to the material?

In 1949, following negotiations on the island of Rhodes under the auspices of American UN envoy Ralph Bunche, Israel and Egypt signed an armistice agreement. An apparently weak and unbiased mediator in fact managed to bring about agreement in 1949 despite the asymmetrical power

² See Waage, 2004.

³ See Waage, 2004: pp.244-246.

situation which existed between Israel and the Arab states. Why did Ralph Bunche succeed at bringing about a result when Gunnar Jarring did not?

The Jarring mission was active about twenty years later than the efforts of Bunche. Two wars had occurred in the meantime, the refugee problem was greatly enlarged and Israel's position was strengthened in the area. When the agreement was signed in February 1949, Israel was not yet a member of the UN and only a limited number of states had recognized its statehood. Accordingly, the young state was in desperate need of international recognition.⁴ In 1967 Israel was a member of the UN and firmly established on the international scene. In 1967 Israel had established diplomatic relations with a majority of the world's nations. Gaining international support and recognition was thus not equally important for Israel under the Jarring mission. Israel's most important ally, the US, did not threaten to withdraw its support even when Israel acted against its will.

There was a considerable divergence in the way the 1949 agreement and Jarring's 1971 peace proposal was formed. While Jarring's peace plan lay close to the Egyptian demands, the armistice agreement between Israel and Egypt from 1949 was largely beneficial to Israel. Jarring's proposal required Israel to withdraw from virtually all the areas occupied in the 1967 war. In the 1949 agreement Israel was allowed to keep most of the land it requested.⁵ Egypt received much less than it hoped for and even less than its basic expectations.⁶ The asymmetry of the agreement offers one explanation to Ralph Bunche's success. As a result, the stronger party Israel accepted the favourable agreement reached under Bunche's auspices, while it rejected Jarring's proposal. Egypt accepted both the armistice agreement in 1949 and Jarring's peace plan in 1971. One can easily explain its acceptance of Jarring's plan, because it lay very close to all the Egyptian demands. But why did Egypt accept an agreement which was not very favourable to it in 1949?

The common understanding of the 1949 armistice agreements have been that they were reached exclusively due to the efforts of Ralph Bunche on Rhodes.⁷ However, recent research shows that this observation was incorrect.⁸ UN Secretary General Trygve Lie, American President Harry S. Truman and the State Department were actively engaged in the 1949 negotiations, acting as manipulators behind the scenes in order to prevent the negotiations from breaking down. Carrots and sticks in the form of economic and political pressure were used to assist Bunche's efforts. There

⁴ Israel was admitted as a member to the UN on 11 May 1949. We may assume that Israel's signing of the armistice agreement was regarded as a sign of good intentions which may have influenced the fact that the number of states recognizing the state of Israel grew by more than thirty nations during the armistice negotiations. Næser, 2005: p.100; http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_independence_recognition_who.php (16 April 2007)

⁵ The state of Israel grew by approximately 28 percent compared to the UN partition plan of 1947. Næser, 2005: p.97.

⁶ Næser, 2005: p.97

⁷ Ralph Bunche was an American professor of political science and a former State Department official. He had as a result close ties to decision makers in the American government.

⁸ See also chapter 3: p.46-47

would probably not have been an agreement unless these powerful actors had influenced the course of the negotiations.⁹

However, the involvement of the US government and Trygve Lie also influenced the shaping of the 1949 agreement. Bunche did probably not have much choice but to take the advice from the UN Secretary General and the US to alter his original stances and move closer to the Israeli views if he wished to continue the negotiations.¹⁰ There are several examples of the external actors exposing Egypt to pressure when Bunche was of the opinion that Israel should be the one to make concessions. Although pressure was placed on both parties, far more pressure was put on Egypt than on Israel. This led to a situation in which Egypt was pressured to make concessions on matters in which Israel had a weak case when it came to international law and even on matters of little military importance to Israel.¹¹ As Bunche must have known that the US government and Trygve Lie were all biased in favour of Israel, he must have known that their involvement would lead to an agreement beneficial to Israel. Nevertheless, Bunche did on several occasions ask for their help. This may be seen as a desperate move by Bunche to save the armistice agreement. Bunche took the advice of Lie and the US, probably because he saw no alternative solutions.¹²

During the Jarring mission, the growing US involvement did not follow through when, at an American request, Jarring started to act as an active mediator and put forward an independent, substantive proposal. The US could easily lend active support to the 1949 agreement because it was largely favourable to its potential client state Israel, and because it postponed the most difficult questions. Jarring's peace plan was not a favourable solution to Israel, thus the Americans could not pressure Israel to accept it without expecting considerable trouble domestically and with its most important ally in the Middle East. In the end, not surprisingly, the US fell down on the Israeli side.

The pre-eminence of the US is striking in the so-called successful peace efforts in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Suez War may serve as another example.¹³ The 1956 War was ended primarily as a result of American efforts. At the time of the Suez Crisis the US worked hard through the UN to stop the fighting. When it proved impossible to end the war through the UN, the US applied economic pressure on its close ally Britain and its client state Israel, and succeeded in persuading them to withdraw their forces from Egyptian territories. As opposed to the US behaviour during

⁹ Næser, 2005: pp.2, 76, 106

¹⁰ Næser, 2005: pp.106-107

¹¹ Næser, 2005: pp.73-104

¹² Næser, 2005: pp.106-107

¹³ See chapter 2, pp.19-20

Bunche's and Jarring missions, the US opposed its allies in 1956.¹⁴ This does not fit well with the notion of a general American unwillingness to pressure the Israelis.

Until the mid 1950s, Western influence predominated throughout the Middle East. The Soviet Union had not yet achieved a good foothold in Egypt. However, it was obvious that the Egyptian President Nasser tended towards the Soviet bloc. The American work during the Suez crisis may therefore be seen as an attempt to restrain further communist involvement in the region, and avoid a situation in which the Russians would be given an opening to increased influence in Egypt. By 1967, however, the Soviet Union held considerable influence in Egypt, Syria and Iraq. The Soviet Union was no longer the comparably weak adversary in the Middle East that US President Dwight Eisenhower faced in 1956. President Nixon was, apart from Vietnam, primarily concerned with the American relationship to the Soviet Union.¹⁵ As opposed to earlier, the Arab-Israeli conflict had become intertwined with the East-West conflict.¹⁶ Stability in US-Soviet relations minimized the dangers of confrontation and nuclear war and ensured global stability. Seen from a Cold War perspective, it appeared much more risky to oppose one's clients in 1967 than in 1956.

However, how does the role of the US in the Arab-Israeli conflict really function? The Oslo Process demonstrates that an agreement may in fact be reached through the sole efforts of a weak mediator without any assistance from a potent power. Through a series of secret talks held in and around Oslo during the course of 1993, representatives of the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships had managed to agree on a Declaration of Principles that paved the way for the establishment of the Palestinian Self-Government Authority, a gradual Israeli withdrawal from some of the occupied territories and mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization).¹⁷

As opposed to the case of Ralph Bunche, the Oslo accords were not achieved through American pressure. Israel demanded that the Norwegians limit the information going to the US. Since Golda Meir's time in office, Israel had an ambiguous relationship to its protector. It was more interested in US arms and Dollars than in US mediation. In Norway, Israel has found an easier counterpart than the US. There was no international pressure and Norway was much more willing than the superpower to go along with Israel's conditions. As a result, the Americans were left largely in the dark about the Oslo Channel, they knew about it, but not what was going on. Despite the

¹⁴ Gaddis, 1997: p.17; Goldschmidt, 2004: 124; Hahn, 1991: p.243; Shlaim, 2001: 166; Shlaim, and Sayigh, 1997: 32

¹⁵ Quandt, 1993: pp.68-69

¹⁶ Lundestad, 2004: p.90; Neff 1988: p.280; Touval, 1982: p.135

¹⁷ Shlaim, 2001: pp.512-523; Waage, 2004: p.1-2

exclusion of the US, an agreement was reached.¹⁸ Similar to Bunche's experience, the only means to keep the Oslo Process alive was to keep the negotiations on Israel's premises.¹⁹ Without the goodwill and cooperation of Israel, the process would have fallen apart.²⁰

Although the original account of the Oslo Process presented the Norwegians as mere facilitators, recent research argues that the Norwegian role seems to have been to persuade the Palestinians to accept what they were offered by Israel.²¹ The PLO was the weaker party to the conflict, and willing to accept certain concessions in order to avoid further marginalization. At the time of the Oslo process, it was the PLO that needed international recognition. The first Gulf War had altered the political landscape in the Middle East. Israel and the majority of the Arab states had supported the American-led war against Iraq. The PLO did not belong to this coalition. After the war, the PLO was practically bankrupt and had few friends left. In 1987 the first intifada, a Palestinian uprising, broke out. The intifada further marginalized the PLO leaders who were in exile in Tunis. The intifada created new Palestinian leaders less dependent on the PLO. In addition, support grew among the Palestinians in the occupied areas for fundamentalist organizations like Hamas and Islamic Jihad.²² The Israelis were in a much better negotiation situation than the Palestinians, having bagged virtually all the bargaining cards.

Either the Palestinians gave in, or there would be no deal. If no deal was made, the Israelis could afford to wait for another opportunity, while the Palestinian situation became more precarious. The Norwegians were left no choice if they wished to continue to be a part of the project, thus they continued to play the game according to Israel's rules.²³ It was not the stronger party Israel that the Norwegians involved in the process set out to help. On the contrary they were more inclined to support the Palestinians. However, a strong drive to promote peace led them to adjust their principles.²⁴

Jarring refused to lose control over a possible result, contrary to the manner that we have seen the Norwegians and Ralph Bunche act. Jarring must have assumed that the peace plan of 8 February 1971 was not likely to be accepted by Israel, and that a positive outcome probably would depend on US active involvement. The notion of American initiative could almost be considered a chimera. The only option to succeed in producing a result under the circumstances would have been to propose a peace plan that lay considerably closer to the Israeli position. A proposal would have to

¹⁸ Waage, 2004: pp.235-240

¹⁹ Keeping the US in the dark was also an attempt to protect Norway's role. If the US knew what was going on, they might hijack the Oslo back channel. Waage, 2004: p.238.

²⁰ Waage, 2004: pp.224-246

²¹ Waage, 2004.

²² Waage, 2004: p.221

²³ Waage, 2004: pp.233-234

²⁴ Waage, 2004: pp.225-226

be acceptable to both parties, but primarily to the strongest party, Israel. Jarring's proposal was the opposite: he did not go along with the Israeli conditions. Jarring could choose to prioritise keeping the mission alive by moving his proposal considerably closer to Israel, or to forward a proposal he believed was fair and thereby risk leaving the mission behind. Jarring chose the latter, and the mission failed. The US would not pressure Israel to accept Jarring's peace plan as it stood in 1971. Except for the State Department, it was far too controversial for the American government. Thus Jarring transcended his room to manoeuvre, and played a role he could not succeed in within the given situation as a weak and unbiased mediator.

Some agreements have in fact been reached in the Middle East conflict that have led to lasting peace. Eight years after the breakdown of the Jarring talks, in 1979, Egypt signed a peace agreement with Israel under the auspices of the American president, Jimmy Carter.²⁵ In 1994, in the wake of the Oslo process, Jordan signed a declaration terminating the state of belligerency between Israel and Jordan and committed the two countries to seek a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.²⁶ However, an agreement in the Middle East does not necessarily equal peace. Neither the Oslo agreement between Israel and the Palestinian authorities, nor any of the four armistice agreements following the war of 1948 led to lasting peace in the area. Israel was never sincerely willing to make the necessary concessions to achieve peace after the signing of the agreements, as this most probably would have cost them territories and possibly led to the repatriation of a sizable number of Palestinian refugees. The history of the Middle East shows that agreements are often accepted when they are close to the positions of the stronger party to the conflict. If Jarring had used such an approach, he might have been actively supported by the US as a manipulator behind the scenes and may thus have achieved an agreement. Peace could not be achieved in the manner by which Jarring finally attempted it, namely by making a proposal acceptable to Egypt, the weaker party, but not to Israel.

The aim of the mission was declared in UN Security Council Resolution 242 to be "to establish and maintain contacts with the states concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement."²⁷ Success is a woolly issue in the Middle East conflict. The conclusion of an agreement between Arab states and Israel does not necessarily equal peace. The Jarring mission did not lead to a significant degree of agreement between the parties to the conflict, nor did it generate a peaceful and accepted settlement. But what is success in this context? One may argue that the Jarring mission succeeded in establishing and maintaining contacts

²⁵ See Quandt, 1993: pp.277-283; Shlaim, 2001: pp. 272-273; 324; 371-374; 379-380

²⁶ See Shlaim, 2001: pp. 537-545

²⁷ UN Security Council Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967

with the three states concerned, Egypt, Israel and Jordan.²⁸ It is even possible to claim that the mission succeeded in *promoting* an agreement and *assisting* efforts to achieve a settlement of the conflict. In retrospect, Jarring defended himself by saying that “at least I didn’t make things worse than they were”.²⁹ Perhaps this was a point in time when the Jarring mission was the only barrier preventing a renewed war.³⁰

Within the situation existing in the Middle East in the wake of the Six-Day War, a weak and unbiased mediator like Jarring could not force a solution on unwilling parties. The stronger party, Israel, did not need to concede to the Arabs what they needed in order to accept a peace agreement. Instead the Israelis decided to retain most of the occupied territories. “Dr. Jarring is not a magician. He cannot create elements which do not exist.”³¹

²⁸ Syria was also heavily involved in the Six-Day War of 1967, however, it did not accept the UN Security Council Resolution upon which the Jarring mission was founded.

²⁹ UNOrHist: Krasno, 1990: p.11

³⁰ Rafael, 1981: p.197

³¹ UNA, S-0353-3-9: “Dr. Jarring has a last faint chance” in *London Times*, 30 December 1970.

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The UN Partition plan of 1947:¹



¹ Source: The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (<http://www.mfa.gov.il>) 16 April 2007.

The Israeli borders before June 1967:



Between 1949 and 1967, the Gaza Strip (dark brown) was under Egyptian control and the West Bank (light brown) was under Jordanian rule.

The cease-fire lines after the Six-Day War:



As a result of the Six-Day War, Israel controlled the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

Appendix II: UN SC Resolution 242, 22 November 1967

The Security Council,

Expressing its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East,

Emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security,

Emphasizing further that all Member States in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter,

1. *Affirms* that the fulfilment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:

(i) Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;

(ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;

2. *Affirms further* the necessity

(a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;

(b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;

(c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in this resolution;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of the efforts of the Special Representative as soon as possible.

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