Origins of the Second Arab–Israel War

EGYPT, ISRAEL AND THE GREAT POWERS 1952–56

Michael B. Oren

Ben-Gurion Research Center Ben-Gurion University of the Negev



Contents

[*] Acknowledgments	ix
Abbreviations	xi
List of Maps	xiii
Chronology	xiv
Preface	xxi
Introduction Historial Background: A Context of Change and Instability	1
The Arab–Israel Conflict	1 5
1. THE BORDER	9
The Border in the Aftermath of the July Revolution	13
The Border Under Sharett and Nasser	19
The Border in Great Power Diplomacy	21
From Gaza to Khan Yunis	25
Escalation and Intervention	31
The Border as Casus Belli	36
2. BOYCOTT AND BLOCKADE	39
The Free Officers Inherit the Blockade	42
The Evacuation	49
Israel Against the Evacuation	50
Egypt–Israel Relations and the Suez Crisis	55
3. THE STRUGGLE OVER REGIONAL DEFENCE	60
First Encounters with MEDO	61
MEDO Revived	63
En Route to the Northern Tier	66
Between Baghdad and Gaza	68
Egypt Triumphant, Israel Excluded	70
The Struggle for Jordan	72
Suez: An Epilogue	75

4.	THE ARMS RACE	77
	American Arms for Egypt	79
	Israel's Search Thwarted	82
_	Genesis of the Egypt–Czech Arms Deal	85
••	Israeli Efforts Frustrated and Fulfilled	· 88
	The Final Stretch of the Arms Race	91
5.	SECRET EFFORTS FOR PEACE	95
	The Free Officers and the Question of Peace	99
	1953: Year of Expanded Contacts	102
	Denouement of the Direct Contacts	104
	The Rise and Fall of Project Alpha	109
	The Guildhall Formula	117
	Operation Gamma: America's Last Gamble	121
	Last Efforts for Peace	125
6.	DESCENT TO WAR	129
	Israeli Plans for the Conquest of Gaza	130
	Operation Omer: The Drive Towards Tiran	132
	The Powers Prepare for War	135
	The Linking of Operations Kadesh and Musketeer	138
7.	CONCLUSION	145
	Notes	152
	Appendices	180
	Bibliography	189
	Index	195

•

•