

Edexcel IGCSE History

Option C5: Conflict, Crisis and Change: The Middle East c1919- c1973

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Chapter 1: Build up of tension in Palestine 1919-45

Background to 1919

Jews had lived in Palestine at the time of the Romans but had been expelled after two revolts in AD70 and AD135. They lived where they could and were often persecuted. They were known as 'Christ killers' and as money lenders. Hatred of Jews (anti-semitism) became common in Europe and by the end of the nineteenth century violent attacks on them frequently occurred. About three million Jews escaped eastern Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century and large numbers emigrated to the USA.

Zionism

In 1896, Theodore Herzl organised a conference to discuss the idea of Zionism. It was not a new idea, but it was the first time that it was organised. Herzl stated that the Jews were a people who deserved their own homeland. He gave as his reasons the fact that Jews were often persecuted. (In Russia in the 1890s, 20,000 Jews were killed in attacks called Pogroms.) 206 delegates from 16 countries attended the conference. Herzl set up the Jewish Colonial Trust in 1900 to provide funds for Jewish people to settle in Palestine.

Almost immediately large numbers of Jews began to emigrate to Palestine from all over the world. By 1914, about 75,000 Jews had arrived in Palestine and there were about 650,000 Arabs living in the area. In 1909 Tel Aviv, an entirely Jewish town, was founded. Attacks on Jews by Arabs began at the same time and by 1914, there were four anti-Zionist organisations in Palestine.

The impact of the First World War

On November 5 1914, Britain declared war upon Turkey. The Turkish (or Ottoman) Empire included much of the Middle East. To defeat the Turks the British wanted the support of the Arabs.

The McMahon Letter

This was an attempt to win the support of Arabs in the war against Turkey. On 24 October 1915, Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner, sent a letter to Emir Hussein, the Sherif of Mecca. This became known as the McMahon letter.

Great Britain is prepared to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions demanded by the Sherif of Mecca. Great Britain will protect the Holy Places against all attacks. Great Britain will assist the Arabs to set up governments in those territories.

The Sykes-Picot Agreement

In the same year as the McMahon letter, an agreement was drawn up by Sir Mark Sykes, who was British and Charles Picot, who was French; the agreement was kept secret until 1917. This was a draft of how Palestine could be divided after the war. This became known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement:

Britain and France are prepared to set up and to protect an Arab state in Palestine. The two countries are prepared to negotiate the boundaries of the Arab state.

Both the McMahon Letter and the Sykes-Picot Agreement backed the idea of an Arab state in Palestine.

The Balfour Declaration

But unfortunately British government policy took another direction. On 2 November 1917, the British Foreign Office sent a letter to Lord Rothschild, a leading British Zionist. This became known as the Balfour Declaration.

The **Balfour Declaration** was a statement made by the British government in 1917 that it would support a Jewish state in Palestine:

His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will make every effort to achieve this objective. It is understood that nothing shall be done to affect the civil and religious rights of any existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.

This contradicted the promises made to the Palestinian Arabs in the McMahon Letter and the Sykes-Picot Agreement that Britain would back a Palestinian state in return for Arab support against Turkey during the First World War. The position taken in the Balfour declaration was reiterated in the Balfour Letter of 1919.

The Balfour Letter

In Palestine we do not propose even to go through the process of consulting the present inhabitants of the country. The four Great Powers are committed to Zionism, whether it is right or wrong. Zionism is far more important than the 600,000 Arabs who now inhabit Palestine.

Together, these statements created a situation in which the British government had committed itself to two completely different policies. On the one hand it had backed a Palestinian Arab state while at the same time backing an independent Jewish state.

Palestine after 1918

In 1919 Britain was given a mandate to govern Palestine by the League of Nations. Both the Arabs and Jews in Palestine thought that President Wilson's idea of self-determination would bring them independence. They were disappointed that the peace settlement gave them a new master – Britain.

Palestine was a territory which had been owned by the Ottoman Empire and was called **Class A mandate**, which, according to the League, meant that 'it had reached a stage of development where its existence as an independent nation can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as it is able to stand alone.' Hence the Arabs looked forward to independence in the near future.

However, in the period immediately after the end of the First World War, more than 10,000 Jewish immigrants arrived in Palestine. This prompted Arab leaders to ask the British to set up an Arab state before even more Jews arrived. The British refused.

The years to 1939 were a time of violence between the Arab and Jewish communities. Moreover, both communities began to rebel against the British. In 1921 the British banned all immigration in order to calm the situation but immigrants kept arriving. Fighting between the two groups erupted in 1921 at Jaffa (now Haifa), the

main arrival port for Jewish immigrants) and 1929. In these incidents, more than 30 Jews were killed and 339 wounded and the Arabs lost 116 killed and 232 wounded. Many of the casualties were at the hands of the British police and army. Immigration rose in the mid-1920s when large numbers of Jews moved from Poland and Russia and again after 1933 following the persecution of Jews in Germany by the Nazis. There were about 150,000 Jews in Palestine by 1930.

Jewish immigration to Palestine 1931-35

Year	Number
1931	4,075
1932	9,553
1933	30,327
1934	42,359
1935	61,854
1936	28,954
1937	9,647
1938	11,773
1939	15,386

Population of Palestine 1922-42

Year	Total population	Number of Muslims	Number of Jews
1922	752,048	589,177	83,790
1931	1,036,339	761,922	175,138
1935	1,308,112	836,688	355,157
1939	1,501,698	927,133	445,457
1942	1,620,005	995,292	484,408

The rapid influx of immigrants in the 1930s strengthened the claim for a Jewish homeland. By 1939, there were some 450,000 Jews living in Palestine and the immigrants who had arrived after 1920 had brought with them about \$250million to invest in their 'homeland'.

In 1936 a general strike was organised by the Arabs and a virtual civil war broke out. The Arab revolt lasted for three years. In the first six months of the Arab revolt, 89 Jews were killed and more than 300 were injured. 20,000 British troops were sent in to keep order, but one British officer organised Jewish Special Night Squads to attack Arab villages.

The Arabs thought that the British favoured the Jews by helping developing their defence force (*Haganah*), fining Arabs disproportionately, destroying Arab houses which were thought to contain arms or terrorists and torturing Arab prisoners. Several Arab mayors were hanged. The Arab revolt resulted in many deaths – British figures for 1938 are shown in the table below.

	Killed	Injured
Arab civilians	486	636
Arab rebels	1138	196
Jews	292	649
British security forces	69	233

The Peel Commission

The Arab revolt made Britain consider its position in Palestine and in 1937, a Royal Commission was set up to report on the problem. The Peel Commission suggested two states, an Arab state in the south and a Jewish state in the north. This was accepted by the Jews, but rejected by the Arabs, who were unwilling to hand over any territory that they considered to be theirs by right. The Arabs then resumed their revolt and continued their policy of assassination and terrorist attacks.

Map of the Peel Commission's suggested partition of Palestine



map taken from Wikimedia Commons

An extract from the Peel Commission of 1937:

There is no common ground between the Jews and the Arabs. They differ in religion and in language. Their cultural and social life, their ways of thought and conduct, are as incompatible as their national aspirations. Neither Arab nor Jew has any sense of service to a single State... The National Home cannot be half-national.

There was a further commission in 1938 which recommended partition again. Once more the Arabs rejected it even though the proposed Jewish State was smaller than that suggested in 1937. In May 1939, in the Macdonald Report, the British Government announced how it was going to deal with the problem of Palestine:

The objective of His Majesty's Government is the establishment within ten years of an independent Palestinian state. The independent state should be one in which Arabs and Jews share in government in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each community are safeguarded.

In other words, the British government had decided to set up a state in which Arabs and Jews were equal. In addition the British government set a quota of 10,000 Jewish immigrants per year for five years after 1939 and after that date, no further Jewish immigration was to be permitted unless the Arabs of Palestine allowed it. The Peel Commission and the Macdonald Report had annoyed both the Arabs and the Jews.

The impact of the Second World War

When war broke out in Europe in 1939, the situation in Palestine eased and many Jews volunteered to fight against Nazi Germany. However, some Jews saw Britain as their main enemy and carried out terrorist activities in the hope of forcing a withdrawal from Palestine. Two Jewish organisations emerged – *Irgun Zvai Leumi* and the Stern Gang (its official name was the *Lohamei Herut Israel* – *Lehi* – fighters for the Freedom of Israel) who took extreme measures against the British. The leader of the Stern Gang was arrested and shot in 1942. Nevertheless, terrorist activities continued and the Gang assassinated Lord Moyne, a British minister, in Cairo in 1944.

There were divisions within the Jewish groups and the moderates did not support the extremists. Ben Gurion, a leading moderate, insisted that the only way forward was to defeat Nazism and then persuade Britain to grant independence. As a result, Ben Gurion gave the British authorities large amounts of intelligence which enabled the British to arrest leading members of *Irgun* and the Stern Gang. In 1944, Menachem Begin, leader of the *Irgun*, openly proclaimed the beginning of a Jewish revolt.

At the end of the Second World War, there was tremendous sympathy for the Jewish people following the holocaust. In 1945 the British government set up a committee of enquiry with the USA to look into the plight of Jews in Palestine. The committee reported that immigration limitations should be lifted. The British government did not implement the report and turned back several boatloads of refugees - in 1947, one such ship, the *Exodus*, was carrying 4,500 refugees from Germany. This action highlighted the problem of the Jewish refugees and showed Britain to be cruel and heartless.

Because Britain was unwilling to grant independence and was refusing to allow in large numbers of refugees, the activities of the *Irgun* and the Stern Gang increased after the end of the Second World War. Bridges and roads were destroyed and banks were raided in order to finance their actions. The British had to send more troops so that order could be maintained and by 1946, there were almost 100,000 British troops based in Palestine.

The British were very severe in their dealing with the Jewish terrorist groups but this served only to lose them the support of the moderates. In 1946, the Irgun planted bombs in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, where the British Military headquarters were. 91 people were killed and 45 were injured. The British response was to arrest and intern leading Jewish figures. Ben Gurion had to flee to Paris to avoid arrest.

Photograph of the bomb-damaged King David Hotel, 1946



image from Wikimedia Commons

As the violence continued, the British government felt it was unable to maintain the mandate. It was expensive and costing the lives of British soldiers. In addition, Britain was under constant world criticism for its handling of the refugee problem and the activities of the Jewish groups.

In February 1947, the British government announced that it was giving up its mandate and asked the United Nations to take over responsibility for Palestine.

Question guidance for Section C

Question (a)

Part (a) questions will ask you to get **three** points from the source. This is a comprehension question, worth three marks, so spend about 5 minutes on this question.

From the Peel Commission, 1937

A conflict has arisen between two national communities within the narrow bounds of one small country. About 1,000,000 Arabs are in strife with 400,000 Jews. The national hopes of these two are the greatest bar to peace. The First World War inspired the Arabs with the hope of reviving the tradition of the Arab 'golden age'. The Jews mean to show what the Jewish nation can achieve when restored to the land of its birth. National assimilation between Jews and Arabs seems to be ruled out.

(a) What does the source tell us about the Jewish- Arab problem?
(3)

- Ensure you understand the focus of the question. Highlight or underline key words or phrases in the question.
- As you read the source highlight at least three points in the source.
- Describe these points. You could signpost your answer by telling the examiner each time you get a point from the source.
- You do not need to include your own knowledge, in other words knowledge from outside the source. Own knowledge will not be credited and will waste valuable time.

Possible answer

This source tells me that there was a conflict between the Jews and the Arabs. It also tells me that there were 1,000,000 Arabs and 400,000 Jews. Finally it tells me that the national hopes of the two groups is stopping peace between them.

Have a go at this next question.

- (a) What does the source tell us about the Arabs and the Mandate?
(3)

From an interview in 1979 with an Arab who grew up in the Palestinian mandate

Our message was simple. During the period of the British Mandate, the British should have enabled us to move towards independence. That was supposed to be the goal of the Mandate. It was clear the real goal was different. It was to establish a Jewish state on Arab ruins, to uproot the Arab from his country. They were going to replace us with a Jewish state.

Chapter 2: The creation of Israel and the war of 1948-49

Britain and the United Nations

In February 1947 the British government announced that it was giving up its mandate and asked the United Nations to take over responsibility for Palestine. The British said they would leave Israel by 14 May 1948 and hoped that the United Nations would be able to offer a solution to the Palestinian problem. During these later stages of the mandate in 1947, the conflict on Palestine developed into almost a civil war between the Jews and the Arabs with the British in the middle. There were atrocities on both sides and in 1947, the Arab village of Deir Yassin was attacked by Jewish forces and several hundred inhabitants were killed. Jews were killed in Jerusalem and Arabs killed in Sefad and British soldiers were often ambushed. Between 1945 and 1948, 338 British soldiers were killed by Jewish terrorists.

In August 1947 the United Nations recommended dividing Palestine between Arabs and Jews. The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a Resolution requiring the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine on 29 November 1947. However, this meant partitioning Palestine and the Arabs were completely against this plan because they believed that Palestine was theirs by right.

Research task

Search the Internet for a map of the 1947 UN Partition plan for Palestine and compare it to the map of the Peel Commission's suggested partition of Palestine which can be found in Chapter 1.

The Arabs rejected the partition plan because they outnumbered the Jews and were to be given the poorest parts of the land in Palestine. Many Jews opposed the UN Plan because it meant that Jerusalem would not be a part of their country. There was fighting between the two groups to control the roads to Jerusalem and the ferocity of the violence between the two groups grew even more as the date of the British withdrawal drew near. In April, the Jewish forces captured Haifa from the Arabs. By this time, almost 300,000 Palestinian had fled their homeland.

On the last day of the British mandate, 14 May 1948, the state of Israel was proclaimed by David Ben Gurion who became its first Prime Minister.

Part of the declaration of independence stated:

We hereby proclaim the state of Israel. It is the natural right of the Jewish people to lead, as do all other nations, an independent existence in its sovereign state.

The state of Israel will be open to the immigration of Jews from all countries. It will be based on the principles of liberty, justice and peace. It will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens without distinction of religion, race or sex. It will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, education and culture.

The first Arab-Israeli War, 1948-9

However, the Arab peoples in the surrounding countries objected to the new state and tried to destroy it. On 15 May 1948 the armies of Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt attacked Israel. The Arabs expected to destroy Israel very quickly. In theory they greatly outnumbered the Israelis and had many advantages in military hardware.

- The Israelis had no airforce or heavy artillery. They had some armoured vehicles which they had stolen from the British and were able to buy good quality rifles from Czechoslovakia.
- The war was a series of clashes between forces from the two sides.
- The first phase of the war lasted until 11 June, when the UN mediator, Folke Bernadotte, set up a truce. The Israelis rejected it because it suggested: taking land away in the south, Arab rule in Jerusalem and allowing the return of the 300,000 Arab refugees. The Arab forces had had some successes and driven the Israelis back in several places, but their forces were exhausted.
- Bernadotte was assassinated by the Stern Gang in September. Some Israelis condemned this action.
- In October, Israeli forces captured the whole of Galilee and in subsequent weeks pushed Egyptian forces into the Sinai desert. The Egyptians were able to hold on to the land around Gaza.
- The Arab Legion from Transjordan was the only experienced force and held on to the city of Jerusalem.
- When further armistices were signed in 1949, under the direction of the UN, the Israelis could claim that they had won the war and had secured their existence as an independent country – for the time being.
- Israel refused to hand back the land she had occupied in the fighting.
- The Arab states refused to recognise the existence of Israel.

Why did the Israelis win the war?

- The *Haganah*, which was the basis of the Israeli army, was well trained and used to fighting. Many had fought for the British during the Second World War. In addition, Israeli forces were extremely well led.
- The Israelis had been able to buy large supplies of modern equipment from abroad, particularly from the USA. Golda Meir had visited the USA and raised \$50million dollars in 1948 and this money ensured that the Israelis were able to buy weaponry for the war.
- The Arab armies were inexperienced and divided. Each of the countries had its own battle plans and aims. There was no united Arab command.
- Israel's opponents made separate truces, the first in January 1949 and the last in July 1949.

Israel after the first war, 1948-49



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What were the results of the war for Israel?

- Israel gained more land than it had been allotted in the UN Partition Plan.
- In Israel the war had very profound effects. There were no peace treaties after the war, so it was clear that this was no more than a cessation of hostilities. Another attack could be expected at any time.
- About 6,000 Jews had been killed during the war. Israelis were well aware that they had to be on their guard against another attack. Israel became a country on a permanent war footing.
- The Israeli army was proportionally one of the largest in the world. Military spending accounted for 20% of the budget. Military training became compulsory for all except the most Orthodox of Jews.
- The Israelis defended their country and occupied more territory.
- 800,000 Arabs began to leave the new state of Israel. This created the Palestinian refugee problem, which was to be at the heart of Middle Eastern affairs for the next fifty years.
- The money that had been donated by US citizens showed the dependence on the USA and gradually Israel came to depend not only on continued financial contributions from Jewish people in the USA but also the US government.
- The Israelis believed that the Arab refugee problem was caused by a war of aggression launched by the Arab states against Israel in 1948 and 1949. The Palestinians believed that Israelis had stolen land that belonged to the Palestinian Arabs.
- In 1949, 239,000 Jews emigrated to Israel from all over the world.
- The Jewish population of Israel rose from 770,000 in 1948 to 1,717,814 in 1954.
- New settlements were begun to house the new immigrants. Many of these were in areas that Israel had occupied in 1948-9. This was a further source of anger for Arabs.
- In 1950, the **Law of Return** gave every Jew the right to return to Israel. The population rose rapidly as a result.

- Israel emerged from the war as a democracy, with all citizens, including those Arabs who had stayed in the country, being able to vote.
- Israel was recognised by the USA and the USSR.

What were the results of the war for the Arab states?

Palestinian Refugees

- The most lasting problem created by the war was the Palestinian refugees. Altogether about 800,000 Arabs fled from Palestine to neighbouring countries, where they lived in squalid refugee camps.
- These refugee camps became the training grounds for the freedom fighters or *Fedayeen*. It was the Arab refugees who formed the terrorist groups that were to play such a major role in the 1970s and 1980s.
- The Palestinian Arabs became a people without a country – just as the Jews had been.
- The Palestinians began attacking Israeli targets immediately. In 1951, 137 Israelis were killed and in 1955, 238 were killed.
- The most important guerrilla group was Al Fatah, formed in 1956. Yasser Arafat became the leader. Al Fatah became the most important group in the Palestine Liberation Organisation when it was set up in 1964.
- The war also produced a determination on the part of the Arabs that Israel had to be destroyed. When the Palestine Liberation Organisation was set up in 1964, it had the destruction of Israel as part of its charter.
- Internationally the war increased suspicion of the West and particularly of the USA, which had recognised Israel immediately. For the first time the Arab states began to look towards the Soviet Union.
- It also increased support for Arab nationalists such as Nasser in Egypt and led to the downfall of King Farouk of Egypt.

- As the 1948-49 War was only ended by a series of truces, the borders of Israel were not fixed but marked by armistice lines. Over the next few years there were repeated incursions from either side and constant artillery bombardments. Israel's frontiers gave it no security.
- To try to stabilise the situation, Britain, France and the USA issued the Tripartite Declaration in 1950. They stated that they would use force against either Israel or the Arab states if they used force to alter the armistice lines. Despite this, war broke out again in 1956.

Question guidance for Section C

Question (b)

Question (b) will give you a choice of two factors. You have to choose one of these and describe its **key features**. This question is worth 7 marks so spend about ten minutes writing your answer.

Here is an example:

(a) Describe the key features of the end of the British Mandate in Palestine or the formation of the state of Israel in the years 1948-50. **(7)**

- Ensure you make the right choice. In other words the factor you can write most about.
- Stick to your choice. Some students write a paragraph about one factor, cross it out and write about the second factor. This wastes valuable time.
- Highlight or underline key words or phrases in the question. This should ensure that you focus on the question.
- Aim to write at least two key features or paragraphs.
- Key features can include causes, events and results.
- Try to make links between each of the key features. Use link words or phrases such as *moreover*, *however*, *consequently*, *therefore*, *as a result*, *this led to*.

Possible answer

The first key feature of the end of the British Mandate was that there was virtually a civil war between the Arabs and the Jews. There was chaos in Palestine. Each side committed atrocities and the worst was the attack by Jewish forces on the Arab village of Deir Yassin where large numbers of civilians were killed. Importantly, there were many attacks on the British forces and many soldiers were killed. The deaths of the soldiers confirmed the British view that they were right in the decision to end the Mandate.

A most important feature during the end of the Mandate was the announcement of the United Nations' Partition Plan. The Arabs felt betrayed by Britain and the United Nations because the Plan gave largely the best land to the Jews. Moreover, the Jews were to be given a disproportionate share of the land when considering population. The ill-feeling caused by the Plan led to fiercer fighting and a battle for Jerusalem, which was considered the holiest of cities by both groups.

Have a go at the other key feature, the formation of the state of Israel in the years 1948-50.

Chapter 3: The Suez Crisis, 1956

The impact of the 1948-49 War on Egypt

As in several of the other Arab states, the humiliation of defeat was felt greatly in Egypt. In July 1952, the Free Officers Movement seized power in a bloodless coup in Egypt and King Farouk was allowed to go into exile. Almost immediately the new leader of Egypt emerged as Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser.

What were Nasser's aims for Egypt?

- To force the British to leave the bases that they still held in Egypt around the Suez Canal.
- To unite the Arab nations in one single movement with Egypt at its head.
- To end the influence of the West in the Middle East and establish the Arab world as a non-aligned group.

As the Cold War between the USA and the USSR developed in the years after 1945, Arab leaders soon realised how to exploit the interest of the two Superpowers. The USSR was keen to win allies in any part of the world and when the Arab leaders turned to the USSR for economic and military assistance, the USA responded with similar offers.

Nasser began to create his own vision of Egypt and part of this meant abolishing a parliament and political parties. Many social and economic reforms were introduced to create a more modern and industrialised country. However, some in the West regarded Nasser as a dictator who had to be watched carefully. France particularly objected to Nasser's support for the Algerian nationalists who were rebelling against French rule. In 1955, France supplied Israel with Mystère 4s, the best jet fighter aircraft in Europe. During the same year, Britain removed all its military bases from Egypt.

The Suez Crisis

Why did Nasser seize the Suez Canal?

In February 1955, there was a serious Israeli incursion into the Gaza Strip in order to attack *fedayeen* bases. 36 Egyptian soldiers were killed. In response, Nasser began to encourage Palestinian guerrillas to raid Israeli held territory, but soon realised that the only way that Egypt could defend itself against Israel was by obtaining modern weapons. He appealed to the USA for military aid, but was refused because of the influence of the powerful Jewish lobby in Washington.

Nasser then refused to join the western organised Baghdad Pact, which had been set up in February 1955 and instead agreed to buy arms from Czechoslovakia in September 1955. Egypt bought – 80 Mig 15 jet fighters, 45 Ilyushin bombers and 115 T-34 tanks. The USSR sent about 1,000 technicians and advisers to train Egyptian soldiers.

The Israelis were aware of the Egyptian build up of forces and some members of the government wanted to strike at Egypt and remove any potential threat. To do so they needed international support but they could not expect any from Britain, and France would not act without Britain.

Circumstances changed in 1956, when Nasser was refused money for the Aswan Dam project. The USA, Britain and the World Bank had agreed to finance the dam but withdrew the offer of money when it became known that Nasser had bought weapons from the Communists.

Nasser's immediate reaction was to nationalise the British and French owned Suez Canal indicating that in future it would be run by Egyptians for Egypt's benefit. He then announced that he would use the funds gained from the Suez Canal to build the Aswan Dam.

In September 1956, an international conference was held in London to discuss the Suez Canal and Britain, France and the USA announced plans for an international organisation to run the Canal. This was rejected by Egypt and the USSR. The following month, the USSR vetoed a compromise plan at the United Nations.

Why did Britain and France send forces to Suez?

Reactions in Britain and France to Nasser's actions were very extreme. The British government regarded Nasser's actions as a direct threat to the Commonwealth, which, it believed, depended upon the Canal for trade links. Britain still had parts of its empire in the Far East and had oil interests in the Persian Gulf. Equally important, Britain was also dependent upon Middle Eastern oil and the Suez Canal was the main route for oil to reach Britain. The British claimed that they were acting in the interest of keeping an international waterway open. They stated that the Egyptians would not be able to operate the canal effectively. But in fact, Nasser kept the canal open and allowed access to all countries. Traffic actually increased.

The British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, had privately declared that he wanted Nasser destroyed. Eden viewed Nasser as a fascist dictator who must not be appeased and said he would not let Nasser have 'his thumb on our windpipe'. Egypt's links to the USSR also added to the British dislike of Nasser. The British and French governments believed that Nasser was unpopular in Egypt and that an attack would lead to a popular uprising by the Egyptian people.

Eden wanted a reason to step in and remove Nasser. On 23 and 24 October, Britain, France and Israel met in Sèvres, near Paris, to plan their actions against Nasser. These plans were secret and showed the extent to which those involved disliked and feared Nasser.

The Sèvres agreement

- The Israelis would move into the Sinai desert and attack *fedayeen* bases to prevent the constant attacks.
- Israel would attack Egyptian forces and end the blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba and the Straits of Sharm el Sheikh which was preventing Israeli ships reaching the Red Sea.
- Britain and France would then intervene to restore order and safeguard the canal, which was an international waterway. This would appear to justify military action on the part of Britain and France.

The Suez Crisis: Timetable of events

29 October 1956	The Israeli army attacked Egypt through Sinai without warning. A three pronged armoured attack swept across the desert and paratroopers were dropped ahead of the tanks to secure the passes in the Sinai mountains.
30 October	The British and French governments demanded that Egypt and Israel withdraw their forces 16km on each side of the Suez Canal, or they would intervene within twelve hours. Nasser refused.
1 November	British and French planes began to bomb the Egyptian airforce, destroying most of Nasser's planes on the ground.
2 November	The United Nations called for an immediate ceasefire.
5 November	The Israelis captures Sharm-el-Sheikh and secured the Sinai. Fighting between Egypt and Israel had virtually ceased when the British and French dropped paratroops at Port Said. Britain and France claimed that they were intervening to restore order to the region.
6 November	200 British and French warships bombarded Port Said and then landed a further 22,000 troops many by helicopter. Port Said was taken and then the invaders took control of the canal. But not before Nasser had ordered it to be blocked by sunken ships.
7 November	Britain and France announced a cease-fire and the withdrawal of their troops from Egypt. This took place over a six-week period. The Israelis withdrew six months later from the Sinai, Gaza Strip and Sharm-el-Sheikh and a UN peacekeeping force was put in place for ten years.

Military casualties of the Suez Crisis

Country	Killed	Wounded
Britain	16	96
France	10	33
Israel	c170	c900
Egypt	c2,000	c4,000

Why did Britain and France withdraw?

Pressure from the United Nations

- There had been overwhelming condemnation of the invasion. The US had put a resolution to the Security Council of the United Nations calling for Israel to withdraw its forces on 2 November.
- Britain and France vetoed the resolution and then put pressure on the Israelis to continue, so that they could appear to be acting as peacekeepers. The General Assembly voted 64-5 for a cease-fire on the same day.

Pressure from the Superpowers

USA	USSR
US forces were put on stand by and President Eisenhower told Eden that he must withdraw.	The Soviet Union threatened to send troops to support Egypt and hinted that it might use Soviet missiles against France and Britain.
The USA did not wish to be seen as approving an attack on an independent state by countries such as Britain and France who still had large empires.	There was open support for all Arab nations.
Britain was dependent on Middle East oil, which had been cut off by the blockade of the Suez Canal. The only alternative source of supply was the USA. Eisenhower stated that he would only provide oil if Britain withdrew.	
The USA put economic pressure on Britain and the pound lost value in the world currency markets.	

What were the results of the Suez Crisis?

- It was a massive blow to British and French prestige and influence and a massive boost to Arab nationalism and Nasser in particular. He developed plans to unite the Arab world under his leadership.
- France and Britain, both Permanent Members of the Security Council, had ignored the UN Charter.
- Every British and French asset in Egypt was seized and property was attacked and destroyed throughout the Arab world.
- US relations with Britain and France suffered and both countries were isolated internationally. Both domestic governments fell within twelve months.

The effects of the Suez Crisis upon Israel

- Israel was guaranteed the use of the Gulf of Aqaba and a UN peacekeeping force took up station in the Sinai in March 1957.
- The port of Eilat, which had been blockaded by the Egyptians before the war, was now reopened.
- Israeli military superiority had been confirmed and many Soviet-built tanks had been captured.
- The Suez Canal remained closed to Israel.
- The *fedayeen* bases in the Sinai were destroyed.

The effects of the Suez Crisis on the Middle East

- The Arab League pledged its support for Nasser and Arab hostility to Israel increased still further.
- The pro-western regime in Iraq was overthrown in 1958. Syria and Libya began to look to the Soviet Union for military aid.
- In 1958 Syria and Egypt formed the United Arab Republic, this lasted for three years until a coup in Syria in 1961. Nasser hoped that this would be the basis for the Pan-Arab movement that he envisaged.
- In 1964 Nasser supported the setting up of the Palestine Liberation Organisation
- The Suez Crisis also led to Superpower involvement in the Middle East on a large scale. The Middle East was now a key part of the Cold War and the two Superpowers sought to gain as much influence and power as possible.
- In 1957, the Eisenhower Doctrine was announced; this offered US aid to any country in the Middle East threatened by communism.
- The USSR increased its involvement in Egypt and military advisers were sent there. By 1970, there were an estimated

20,000 and military aid worth more than \$12,000,000,000 was sent to Egypt and other Arab countries.

By March 1957, all Israeli forces were back behind their original borders. The Egyptians did not accept that there was a permanent peace and Nasser, despite the diplomatic success at Suez, was determined to seek revenge for the military defeat. In 1967, war erupted again.

Question practice

You now have the opportunity to practice Questions (a) and (b) in Section C.

- (a) What does the source tell us about the seizure of the Suez Canal in 1956? **(3)**

From a letter to the US President written by the British Prime Minister, September 1956.

The seizure of the Suez Canal is the opening move in a planned campaign designed by Nasser to expel all western influence and interests from Arab countries. Nasser believes his prestige in Arabia will be so great that Arab governments will have to place their oil resources under the control of a united Arabia led by Egypt. When that moment comes, Nasser can deny oil to Europe and we here shall all be at his mercy.

- (b) Describe the key features of the end of the involvement of the USA in the Suez Crisis. **(7)**

Chapter 4: The Arab-Israeli conflicts of 1967 and 1973

Relations between Egypt and Israel 1957-67

After the Suez crisis, the UN peacekeeping force was in Egypt for ten more years. During that time there were many border disputes between Israel and its Arab neighbours. In fact, by 1967 more than 100,000 clashes had been reported since 1949. It was clear that a major conflict was going to take place at some point in the future. War broke out again in June 1967.

The Six Day War

Why did war break out in June 1967?

After the Suez Crisis, Israel continued to build up its armed forces by buying weapons from the USA, Britain, France and West Germany. The USSR supplied the Arab states with arms. The United Nations peace-keeping force was unable to stop border skirmishes and Palestinian groups such as *Fatah* and the Palestine Liberation Organisation frequently raided Israeli settlements. Israel was further concerned when Egypt and Syria signed a defence pact in November 1966. In late 1966 and early 1967, Israel was subjected to *Fatah* attacks. By 1967, Nasser felt in a strong enough position to challenge Israel and in May ordered the UN forces to leave. He closed the Gulf of Aqaba and blockaded the Israeli port of Eilat.

The Egyptians claimed that the Israelis were building up forces for an attack. President Nasser began to make a series of threatening speeches. These were dangerous actions as they gave the impression that Nasser was making aggressive moves. Nasser was hoping that the tone of his speeches and the increased strength of the Arab states, with Soviet weapons, would force Israel to back down. In addition, *Fatah* attacks on Israel from bases in Syria increased in May.

Key dates in May and June 1967

1-10 May	Several <i>Fatah</i> attacks on Israel from Syrian bases.
12 May	The Israeli government stated: There will be no immunity for any State which aids terrorist attacks. Israel will choose when, where and how to reply.
16 May	UN forces withdrew from Egypt.
22 May	Egypt closed the Gulf of Aqaba.
28 May	New government formed in Israel. Moshe Dayan appointed Minister of Defence.
3 June	100,000 Egyptians had moved into the Sinai desert.
4 June	Iraqi troops moved through Jordan on to the West Bank. Forces from Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Algeria and Kuwait were also ranged against Israel.
5 June	Israel began its pre-emptive strikes.

How did Israel react to Nasser's actions?

- The Israelis were supremely confident and saw this as an opportunity to strike a blow at the Arabs.
- They used the Egyptian troop movements and the tone of Nasser's speeches as an excuse to attack Egypt and the other Arab states.
- The Israelis already had a plan of attack that had been drawn up by Moshe Dayan, who had commanded the army in 1956. He wanted to attack before the Arab states were ready and catch them unprepared.
- The Israelis therefore took advantage of Nasser's statements and accused him of threatening war.
- They claimed that there were reports that mines had been laid in the international waterway and that ships, which did not submit to searches, were being fired on.
- The Israelis aimed to show that Nasser was to blame and that they were only trying to maintain stability in the Middle East.
- President Nasser replied insisting that he was defending the rights of the Palestinian people.
- Nasser was now trying to appear the champion of the Palestinians. This was the role that he really wanted, to be the leader of the Arab movement.

The key events of the Six Day War

- On 5 June 1967 the Israeli armed forces attacked the Arab countries without warning. The Egyptian air force was virtually wiped out on the ground – Israel attacked all 19 of Egypt's military air bases. Later that day, the Israelis knocked out the Syrian, Iraqi and Jordanian air forces. As a result of this action Israel controlled the skies for the rest of the conflict.
- The Egyptian army was now helpless and Israeli tanks reached the Suez Canal in three days. The whole of the Sinai desert was occupied by the Israelis.
- The Jordanian army was pushed back across the Jordan River and the Israelis occupied all of the West Bank, capturing the eastern part of Jerusalem by 7 June. Once Jerusalem had been captured, the Jordanian resistance collapsed and retreated across the Jordan river. Jordan accepted the UN demand for a ceasefire.
- Having been defeated in the Sinai, Egypt accepted the UN ceasefire.
- In the north the Israelis encountered fierce resistance from the Syrians but were eventually able to seize the Golan Heights. Israeli forces then began to advance on Damascus. About 100,000 Syrians fled from the Golan Heights.
- The UN call for a cease-fire was accepted by Syria. By 10 June the fighting had finished.

Casualties in the Six-Day War (approximate figures)

	Killed	Wounded
Israel	750	2,500
Arab states	15,000	27,000

Numbers of planes lost: Arab states c450 Israel c35

Why did Israel win so easily?

- Israel had the best-equipped troops in the Middle East. Their arms technique was vastly superior.
- After 1956, Israel's armed forces had been re-shaped and speed, mobility and hitting-power were the key elements to the army and air force.
- By mobilising its reserves, Israel could put 300,000 trained and experienced soldiers into the field. The total troop strength of Egypt, Syria and Jordan was 180,000, though there were forces from other Arab nations.
- The destruction of the Egyptian air force was crucial in securing control of the air.

What were the Results of the Six Day War?

Territory gained by Israel after the Six Day War



image taken from Wikimedia Commons

The impact of the war on Israel

- Israel now had fixed boundaries that could be defended: the Suez Canal, the River Jordan, the Golan Heights.
- Israelis believed that they could force their Arab neighbours to make peace in exchange for territory.
- Israel also now had large numbers of refugees within its own borders and they were crammed into squalid refugee camps. The international image of Israel began to decline for the first time.
- The acquisition of the three areas meant that Israel now had one million Arabs to govern.

The impact of the war on the Arab States

- The war convinced some Arab states that it was impossible to defeat Israel militarily and they began to look for a negotiated peace. However, some of the Arab states met in Khartoum in August 1967 and they decided that there would be 'no peace, no recognition and no negotiation with Israel and insistence on the rights of the Palestinian people in their own country.
- The three main oil-producing states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Libya agreed to give Egypt and Jordan £135 million annually.
- The war made the Palestinian problem more acute. 700,000 refugees left the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
- After the war the Egyptians and Syrians forced the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) out. They left to set up bases in Jordan.
- This change of policy became even more significant when Nasser died in 1970.
- In Jordan it led to civil war in 1970 as the guerrillas tried to take control of the country.
- Some Arab states became convinced that the only way of defeating Israel was by international terrorism, which became far more common after 1967.

Superpowers

- The Superpowers became even more involved in the Middle East.
- From 1968 to 1973 the Soviet Union sent \$2,600,000,000 worth of aid to the Arab states.
- The USA sent \$2,000,000,000 to Israel.
- The Superpowers did not veto the UN Resolution 242 in November 1967. The Resolution called for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 in return for the end of all states of belligerency. The UN recognised that some territorial adjustments were likely and deliberately did not include words *all* or *the* when referred to territories captured during the 1967 war. It recognised Israel's right to live 'free from threats or acts of force within secure and recognized boundaries'. The Resolution became the basis of the Palestinian Arabs' demands in the future.

The Israeli victory did not mean an end to the conflict in the Middle East. The Palestinian Arabs refused to accept defeat and used Resolution 242 as the basis of their demands in the future. Terrorism against Israel increased in the years 1967-73. Aeroplanes were hijacked and there was the assault on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games in 1972.

The war of Yom Kippur, 1973

In 1970, President Nasser died and was replaced by Anwar Sadat. Sadat wanted peace for Egypt in order to re-build his country and he tried to gain support from the two Superpowers. The USA was involved in the Vietnam War and, in addition, there were too many powerful people who supported the Israeli cause, therefore Egypt received no support from the USA. Sadat sought further help from the USSR but he was unwilling to allow them to interfere with the internal affairs of Egypt. In 1972, Sadat ordered all 15,000 advisers from the USSR to leave Egypt.

Sadat came to realise that if he attacked Israel he might provoke a situation which would force Israel to the negotiating table. He needed to defeat Israel in war. War broke out again in 1973.

In September 1967, Sadat made a military agreement with Syria whereby both countries agreed to attack Israel simultaneously. On 6 October 1973, Egypt and Syria suddenly attacked Israel. It became known as the War of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, because the attack took place on the Israeli religious holiday.

Key events of the war

- On 6 October, the Egyptian air force attacked the Israeli defence line on the Suez Canal and then commandos and tanks crossed the Canal into the Sinai desert. Many Israeli planes were shot down by mobile surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and for once they did not control the skies. In addition, the Israelis lost many tanks in the fighting in the Sinai, to the use of portable *Sagger* missiles.
- The Israelis were taken by surprise, but managed to fight off the attacks. The Egyptian forces in Sinai advanced too quickly and allowed the Israelis an opportunity to counter-attack.
- The USA sent Israel huge quantities of arms and the USSR did the same for Egypt and Syria. Neither wanted to see their allies defeated. There was a fear that both Superpowers might become involved. Both seemed to realise this and they began to look for a settlement after 13 October.

- The Israelis won a huge tank battle at the Chinese Farm (15-17 October) and as a result were able to cross the Suez Canal and began to encircle the Egyptian Third Army. Part of the Israeli forces then moved towards the outskirts of Cairo. Crossing the Canal meant that the Israeli were able to threaten Egyptian SAM bases. (There were some 130 such bases.)
- In the Golan Heights, 500 Syrian tanks attacked the Israeli defences and gained much ground. Israel lost more than 30 planes to Syrian SAMs and hand-held *Strella* missiles. Despite early setbacks, the Israelis were able to push back the Syrians and by the time a ceasefire was agreed, they had captured 1,500 square kilometres of Syrian territory.
- Arab oil-producing states realised that they could use oil in the war as a bargaining weapon against Israel and its Western allies. Members of Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) raised prices by 70% and Saudi Arabia cut its production by 10%. Supplies to the USA and the Netherlands were stopped. If the war continued for a long time, the economies of the West would be severely damaged, thus there was an urgency to find a settlement to the war.
- The European Economic Community openly expressed its support for the Palestinian cause.
- A ceasefire was agreed on 22 October, little had changed territorially, but massive casualties and damage had been caused. All fighting had ceased by 24 October.

	Dead	Tanks destroyed (approximate figures)
Israel	2,800	250
Egypt	11,000	700
Syria	5,000	1,150

What effects did the war have?

- The main effect of the war was to convince both sides that peace talks were necessary. Although the Arab forces had not been successful, they had fought well and shown that Israel was not invincible. Sadat's idea of bringing the Israelis to the peace table had been successful.
- Sadat became a hero in the Arab world and he made the USA re-consider its policies towards the Arab states.
- One Arab newspaper said the 'The Yom Kippur War has marked the revival of the Arab fighting spirit.'
- The Israelis had been shaken for the first time and their losses had been proportionally greater than their opponents. The losses convinced many Israeli politicians that there would have to be peace negotiations in the future – Israel could not sustain such losses every few years – in terms of manpower, war material and finance.
- The war also made oil a major factor in world politics for the first time. The Arab states placed an oil embargo on the USA and reduced shipments to the West.
- When the crisis was over, the Arab states continued to raise the price of oil to try to force the West to stop backing Israel.
- Both Superpowers accepted that a solution had to be found the Palestine issue and Henry Kissinger, the US Secretary of State, began his shuttle diplomacy in search of a lasting peace settlement.

Question practice

Question (c)

Question (c) is asking you to write an essay about change over a period of time. This means you must show change either by comparing the situation before and after the development or you must show how it developed during the period. The question will give you four points known as scaffolding to help you with your essay. Remember this is the highest-scoring question on the paper and requires a substantial and detailed response. It's about change, you must show change either by comparing the situation before and after the development or you must show how it developed during the period. The question is worth 15 marks so you should allow 30 minutes for this question.

Here is an example:

- (c) In what ways did relations between Israel and the Arab states change in the years 1967-73?

(15)

You may use the following information to help you with your answer.

- The Six-Day War
- The effects of the Six-Day War
- Yom Kippur War
- Effects of the Yom Kippur War

- Focus on the question. It is about change so ensure you write about changes. Do not just tell the story.
- Use at least three of the scaffolding points. However, you may wish to use one of your own factors or add an additional factor to those mentioned in the question.
- Write a paragraph on each of the factors. At the beginning of each paragraph give the change and then fully explain it. Using the word 'because' often helps you to give a developed explanation.

- For the higher marks you also have to make links between each factor. This means explaining how one change led to the next. Link words or phrases often help to achieve this. Here are some examples: *this led to, as a result, moreover, furthermore, as a consequence, in addition.*
- Write a conclusion showing how the factors you have written about acted together to bring about change.

Part of a possible answer

The Six-Day War brought important changes in relations between Israel and the Arab states because they once again found themselves at war with each other. There had been peace after 1956 and the use of United Nations forces for peace-keeping activities ensured no outbreak of hostilities despite some terrorist activities. However, Nasser expelled the UN and having built up his armed forces made threatening statements which created concern in Israel. Relations worsened through April and May 1967 and radio broadcasts informed Israel they would be 'pushed into the sea'. In addition, the Gulf of Aqaba was closed and the Israeli port of Eilat was blockaded. To avoid being crushed in a vice, the Israelis made a pre-emptive strike and attacked Egyptian and Syrian air force bases on 5 June. Hence, in an atmosphere of worsening relations the worst possible event occurred – war began.

Now complete this answer by:

- Linking the first paragraph (bullet) to the next
- Explaining the other three points in the scaffolding
- Writing a conclusion

Chapter 5: Superpower involvement in the Middle East

The involvement of the USA and the USSR in the Middle East was gradual and as the Cold War developed in the 1950s and 1960s so did the involvement of the USA and the USSR in the Middle East. By 1973, involvement had become so crucial that both sides in the conflict were being supplied millions of dollars worth of armaments. Moreover, in the Yom Kippur War of 1973, there was a fear that the Superpowers might even go to war against each other.

The involvement of the USA occurred directly after the end of the Second World War. The large Jewish population in the USA not only gave Zionist leaders (see Golda Meir in Chapter 1) millions of dollars which enabled the Israelis to defeat the Arabs in 1948-49 but pressured President Truman to force Britain to increase the number of Jewish refugees into Palestine.

When Israel declared its independence in May 1948, it was immediately recognised by the USA and the USSR. Both Superpowers supported Israel's application to join the United Nations in 1949.

As the Cold War between the USA and the USSR developed in the years after 1949, Arab leaders soon realised how to exploit the interest of the two Superpowers. The USSR was keen to win allies in any part of the world and when the Arab leaders turned to the USSR for economic and military assistance, the USA responded with similar offers. What the USA could not do was turn its back on Israel because of the power of the American Jews.

Egypt sought military assistance from the USSR in 1950 and this seemed a way to move into the Middle East and spread communist influence. However, it was the Suez Crisis of 1956 which gave the USSR a strong foothold in the Middle East. Assisting the enemies of Israel meant that the USSR had ready access to many Arab states.

Suez Canal Crisis, 1956

President Nasser sought help from the USA in the mid-1950s and he knew that the only way that Egypt could defend itself against Israel was by obtaining modern weapons. He appealed to the USA for military aid, but was refused because of the influence of the powerful Jewish lobby in Washington. This pushed Nasser to buying weapons from Czechoslovakia, an ally of the USSR.

In September 1955. Egypt bought – 80 Mig 15 jet fighters, 45 Ilyushin bombers and 115 T-34 tanks. The USSR sent about 1,000 technicians and advisers to train Egyptian soldiers. Circumstances changed in 1956, when Nasser was refused money for the Aswan Dam project. The USA, Britain and the World Bank had agreed to finance the dam but withdrew the offer of money when it became known that Nasser had bought weapons from the Communists.

The squabble between the USA and the USSR in the Middle East was becoming clear for all to see and worsened after Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal. In September 1956, an international conference was held in London to discuss the Suez Canal and Britain, France and the USA announced plans for an international organisation to run the Canal. This was rejected by Egypt and the USSR. The following month, the USSR vetoed a compromise plan at the United Nations. The USSR then offered Egypt financial help build the Aswan Dam.

The involvement of the Superpowers in the Suez Crisis, 1956

USA	USSR
US forces were put on stand by and President Eisenhower told Eden (British Prime Minister) that he must withdraw all troops.	The Soviet Union threatened to send troops to support Egypt and hinted that it might use Soviet missiles against France and Britain.
The USA did not wish to be seen as approving an attack on an independent state by countries such as Britain and France who still had large empires.	There was open support for all Arab nations.
Britain was dependent on Middle East oil, which had been cut off by the blockade of the Suez Canal. The only alternative source of supply was the USA. Eisenhower stated that he would only provide oil if Britain withdrew.	
The USA put economic pressure on Britain and the pound lost value in the world currency markets.	

The Suez Crisis also led to Superpower involvement in the Middle East on a large scale. The Middle East was now a key part of the Cold War and the two Superpowers sought to gain as much influence and power as possible.

- In 1957, the Eisenhower Doctrine was announced; this offered US diplomatic, military and economic assistance to any country in the Middle East threatened by communism.
- The USSR increased its involvement in Egypt and military advisers were sent there. By 1970, there were an estimated 20,000 and military aid worth more than \$12,000,000,000 was sent to Egypt and other Arab countries. Trade was developed between Egypt and the USSR and by 1967, half of its exports were sent to the USSR.
- By 1970, the USSR had helped create an air defence system for Egypt which extended to the Suez Canal.
- The USSR was allowed to use the Egyptian port of Alexandria for its Mediterranean fleet.

- Egypt allowed the USSR to use Cairo airport for use of its reconnaissance planes.
- After the Suez Crisis, Israel continued to build up its armed forces by buying weapons from the USA, Britain, France and West Germany. The USSR supplied the Arab states with arms.
- The USA sent \$2,000,000,000 to Israel.
- The Superpowers did not veto the UN Resolution 242 in November 1967. The Resolution called for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 in return for the end of all states of belligerency. There was an acceptance that peace should be a goal but neither Superpower pursued the goal with enthusiasm.

The involvement of the Superpowers in the war of Yom Kippur, 1973

In 1970, President Nasser died and was replaced by Anwar Sadat. Sadat wanted peace for Egypt in order to re-build his country and he tried to gain support from the two Superpowers. The USA was involved in the Vietnam War and, in addition, there were too many powerful people who supported the Israeli cause, therefore Egypt received no support from the USA. Sadat sought further help from the USSR but he was unwilling to allow them to interfere with the internal affairs of Egypt. In 1972, Sadat ordered all 15,000 advisers from the USSR to leave Egypt.

When the Yom Kippur War began, the USA sent Israel huge quantities of arms and the USSR did the same for Egypt and Syria. Neither wanted to see their allies defeated. There was a fear that both Superpowers might become involved. Both seemed to realise this and they began to look for a settlement after 13 October.

- The USSR advised Egypt to accept a ceasefire while it still held part of the Sinai and the USA persuaded Israel not to attack Cairo and Damascus because it feared that the USSR would send in its own troops. Thus it was in the interests of both Superpowers for the war to end.
- The Yom Kippur War made oil a major factor in world politics for the first time. The Arab states placed an oil embargo on the USA and reduced shipments to the West.

- When the crisis was over, the Arab states continued to raise the price of oil to try to force the West to stop backing Israel. The USA had to protect its own economy and began to look for a settlement.
- Both Superpowers accepted that a solution had to be found the Palestine issue and Henry Kissinger, the US Secretary of State, began his shuttle diplomacy in search of a lasting peace settlement.

After an uneasy peace, the Egyptians and Israelis met in 1978 in the USA to frame a peace settlement. However, the issue of the Palestinian Arabs was not settled.

Question practice

You now have the opportunity to practice all three types of questions in Section C.

- (a) What does Source A tell us about the role of the USSR in the Suez Crisis? **(3)**

From an interview with a diplomat from the USSR who was in Egypt during the 1950s

The USSR was keen to win allies wherever we could. The Middle East was important because it had oil and also the USA was allied to Israel – this meant that if we helped the Arab states against Israel we could win favour among them. We could hope to spread communism but if the USA were in the Middle east, we had to be. After the Egyptians were refused money for the Aswan Dam, it was an opportunity for us to step in and offer whatever was needed. When fighting broke out, we naturally offered help and threatened the British and French because they were bullies.

- (b) Describe the key features of the help given by the USA to Israel during the years 1948-55. **(7)**
- (c) In what ways did the Superpowers change the Arab-Israeli conflict in the years 1957-73?

You may use the following information to help you with your answer.

- Effects of the Suez Crisis
- Arms and economic assistance
- The Yom Kippur War
- Oil

(15)

(Total for question 25 marks)