

**UCLA**

**Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies**

**Title**

Africa: A Diplomatic Battleground in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967-1973

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9309h7t3>

**Journal**

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies, 20(3)

**ISSN**

0041-5715

**Author**

Johnson, Maudelyn

**Publication Date**

1992

**DOI**

10.5070/F7203016754

**Copyright Information**

Copyright 1992 by the author(s). All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author(s) for any necessary permissions. Learn more at <https://escholarship.org/terms>

Peer reviewed

## AFRICA: A DIPLOMATIC BATTLEGROUND IN THE ARAB/ISRAELI CONFLICT, 1967-1973

Maudelyn Johnson

### Introduction

The attitude of the Black African states<sup>1</sup> with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict during the period 1967-1973 and the relations between Africa and Israel during the period under discussion span a range of dramatic changes, including cooperation, diplomacy and eventual isolation in the midst of regional antagonism during the period under discussion. The explanations that were given for Black Africa's diplomatic break with Israel in the early 1970s ranged from (a) the Muslim factor, (b) Africa's political opportunism, (c) the Arabs' successful use of advantages of geography, religious, ideological, and propaganda factors, and (d) Arab oil as a weapon of political and economic persuasion. In taking everything into account—actions and reactions—this paper views the landscape from a different point of view and explains the diplomatic break in a theoretical perspective that uses other sets of analyses to better define Black Africa's international relations regarding the Middle East question.

The Black African nations as we know them today began to gain independence from colonial rule from the mid 1950s. These newly independent countries were faced with numerous and complex problems concerning their social and economic development. As they became independent nations, they also became members of regional and international organizations, and consequently, were exposed to a wider variety of global and regional problems that existed outside their individual territorial boundaries. They were caught up in global events of the period; for example, independence struggles for fellow African countries, apartheid in South Africa, and it was through their membership in the United Nations (UN) that many became more intimately involved with the Arab-Israeli conflict. When events of the Middle East conflict exploded, as young nations, many began to play roles according to the dictates of self interest at times, while at other times they acted almost collectively to further the interest of the wider body of Black African States.

The Arab-Israeli conflict not only involved the territorial region of the Middle East, it attracted the Super Powers who became involved by supplying arms and by giving other support; it involved the former colonial powers of France and Britain, as well as other European and

British Commonwealth countries. Finally, the conflict also had an important impact on the newly independent Black African States, in terms of their initiation into world affairs.

The world order at the time was bipolar, with most nations either on the side of the Western Bloc or that of the Eastern Bloc. The newly independent countries of the Third World, in their attempt to avoid membership in either bloc, created the Non-Aligned Movement. They also formed their own regional organizations which were born out of their experiences and ideology as individual nations or as groups of nations, and directed their foreign policy and international relations accordingly. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was founded in 1963 by independent states in Africa of both Arab and Black African nationalities. Because of the large Arab population in some of these countries, such countries also became part of the Arab League.

It was in the UN and the OAU that the Black African nations became most involved in helping to search for a peace settlement in the Middle East. During the first five years of the existence of the OAU, Egypt and a few other Arab countries sought to put the Arab-Israeli conflict on the agenda, but could not since the Black African leaders did not want to become involved in the conflict. But after the 1967 Arab Israeli war, Black African nations began to look at the situation differently. Their attitudes began to change, not only towards the Arabs whom they had long been hostile to and suspicious of, but also towards the Israelis. Their attitudes changed from admiration of the Israelis to suspicion and frustration, and they began to have second thoughts about the Israelis. The Black African nations through the OAU eventually attempted to mediate between the Arabs and the Israelis in 1971, but their attempt failed to bring about the desired change. This failure resulted in the formation of a political alliance between the Arabs and the Africans by 1973 as several African countries broke off diplomatic relations with Israel.

Black African decision makers were not monolithic in their thinking or actions. In fact, it has been documented that there were radical as well as moderate groups within the larger body of OAU. And, yes, poverty and religion played their part in the decision making process. But in the wider analysis, perceptions, misperceptions, ideology, solidarity and bandwagoning played major roles as well, when these nations decided to form a political alliance with the Arabs and sever their diplomatic relations with Israel.

### Arabs, Africa, and Israel

Relations between Africa and Arab countries reflect historical, geopolitical, cultural and contradictory phenomenon<sup>2</sup>. Until the Egyptian revolution under Nasser and his radicalization and consequent support for African nationalists, south of the Sahara, the attitudes of most Black Africans towards the Middle East were either indifferent or hostile<sup>3</sup>. By the 1960s nationalist movements emerged on both sides of the Sahara and resulted in contact between the leaders of countries on both sides of the Sahara. Contradictions and hostilities emerged again when Arabs began to support secessionist movements in Black African states, for example Chad. By the same token, there were anti-African feelings because Black troops were used by the French to control the Syrian and Lebanese uprisings in 1945, and to fight against Algeria's revolutionaries from 1954 to 1962.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, Israel, being a new nation created in 1948, only few years before the first Black African nations themselves began to gain independence,<sup>5</sup> developed later ties with Black Africa. In fact, Israel's relations with Black Africa began with her creation, when Liberia voted in the UN for the partition of Palestine, and was the third nation to recognize Israel. Diplomatic exchange began in 1957 between the two countries.<sup>6</sup>

Israel began to cultivate friendships among the political and trade union leaders of the Black African States when it became clear that independence was on the horizon for them. Contacts were established with these leaders at international conferences and as the countries became independent, Israel recognized them and established diplomatic relations with them. By 1962, Israel had twenty embassies in Africa, and by 1972 Israel had established diplomatic relations with thirty-two of the forty-one independent African states who were members of the OAU<sup>7</sup>. Until then, Israel's dynamic foreign policy succeeded in winning Africa's political support in the international arena. In fact, Israeli diplomacy succeeded in getting African countries to keep the Palestinian question and the Middle East conflict off the agenda of the OAU until 1967, in spite of Egypt's efforts and those of other Arab countries.<sup>8</sup>

Egypt, the most active of the Arab countries in pursuing good relations with Black Africa, had sixteen embassies in Black Africa in 1964, twenty-four in 1966 and by 1973 had established diplomatic missions in all independent African countries.

Months after the 1973 Yom Kippur War between Israel and the Arabs, all but four Black African states had severed diplomatic relations with Israel following the occupation of the Egyptian territory of Sinai by

the former and the expansion of its borders to include the West Bank. But contradictions had been developing between Israel and Black African states before then. Israel, too, began to support secessionist movements in African countries. For example, Israel supported the Biafra secessionists in the Nigerian civil war, and the Southern Sudanese against the Northern Sudanese in the Sudanese civil war. Moreover, Black African states had begun to notice Israel's voting habits in the UN regarding South Africa, and were very uncomfortable with it.

### The International Environment

The international environment was mainly a bi-polar international system, and as developing nations gained political independent status, many decided not to be part of any of the two main blocs, but instead to help create the Non-Aligned Movement. The Third World first made attempts to speak as a group and as a whole at the 1955 Bandung Conference. The participants were mainly Arab and Asian states. Israel was excluded. In the years that followed, the Third World attitude towards Israel and Palestinians began to take shape, and at the early meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement conferences (1961 and 1964 in Belgrade and Cairo), Israel was a target, and was condemned for imperialist policies in the Middle East.<sup>9</sup>

The international and regional ideological environment included not only socialism, capitalism and communism, but also Jewish nationalism, Arab nationalism, and African nationalism. There were radical states and moderate states. The radical states, both Arab and Black African, were the vanguards of anti-imperialism in the Third World. Some states acted as groups in regional and in international forums in order to advance their causes. The following documents the attitudes of the various actors and institutions during the period under study.<sup>10</sup>

### The Actors:

*The United States and the Western Bloc* wanted to reduce Soviet presence and influence in the Middle East and around the world; had a commitment towards Israel's preservation and maintenance; gave political, economic and military support to Israel; wanted to curtail Egypt's influence; began to play a more active role once the military power of the British and the French had deteriorated.

*The Soviets* wanted to reduce the U.S. and other Western influence in the Middle East; wanted to secure greater influence in the region for itself; provided political and military support for the Arabs.

*The British* considered the Israelis to be competitors on the African continent; however, Britain regarded Egypt as one of its worst enemies because of the support Egypt provided to liberation movements; disliked Egypt's anti-imperialist rhetoric, and its nationalization of the Suez Canal; had a commitment to Israel's survival but assumed that peace could be in the Middle East if the Palestinian question was solved.

*The French* wanted to stop the deterioration of its imperial position on the African continent; was intent on bringing down Nasser; considered the Israelis to be competitors on the African continent; joined with the British and the U.S. to support Israel against Egypt.

*Israel* had numerous grievances against the Arabs—closure of the Suez Canal to its shipping; disruption of its shipping; wanted new sea routes and suitable harbors after the Suez closed; wanted to overcome political and diplomatic isolation; became actively involved in Africa after the Suez Canal campaign; lacked substantial financial resources but used its skilled manpower resources to provide technical, agricultural, and educational assistance to African states; gave military aid, too, had a viable socialist model of development which African states admired.

*The Arab States* (as a group) were hostile to Israel from its creation; tried to isolate Israel in internal forums; competed for the support of Black African states against Israel, provided assistance for liberation movements; provided developmental aid to Black Africa; promoted Islam in Black Africa; advocated nationalism, used propaganda to their advantage with Black Africa knowing the latter's stand on "territorial integrity"<sup>11</sup> as documented in the OAU Constitution; used Israel's relations with South Africa to strengthen the antagonism of Black Africa against Israel."

*Black African states* were eager for developmental aid from any source other than former colonial governments; wanted cordial

relations with Israel at least until 1967, when their attitudes changed; had admired the young nation's developmental progress and hoped to emulate that country's hard work and development strategies; after 1967, began to look at Israel with uncertainty; later saw Israel as an aggressive nation after it occupied Arab lands; the international environment had an impact on the way Black African states perceived Israel; with the major Western powers on Israel's side, the general perception was that Israel was pro-Western.

*The Brazzaville Group*<sup>12</sup> was formed in 1960, and included mainly Francophone African states and Nigeria. When these former French colonies and Nigeria formed their organization, they were moderates and were regarded as being affiliated with the Western Bloc. Therefore, they were perceived as being pro-Western. This group had a membership of 12 nations.

*The Monrovia Group* was formed in 1961. They were also regarded as moderates. Twenty nations belonged to this group. They, too, were regarded as pro-Western.

*The Casablanca Group* was formed by Egypt, Morocco, Ghana, Mali and other African states. This group was generally referred to as radical but some of the members were conservative, for example, Morocco and Libya which was governed by King Idris at the time. The other radical States gave the group its radical stamp. They regarded themselves as being anti-imperialist and anti-colonial. Only six states were members of this group, but they were generally regarded as stronger even than the above twenty-member group.

*The Arab League* had twenty members who were either from the Arab Middle East or the African continent. Nine of the members of the Arab League were members of the OAU. The strongest voices for Black African interest within the Arab League were Algeria, Somalia, and the Sudan.

*The OAU* was established in 1963 out of the idea of Pan-Africanism. It nurtured two separate ideals; (1) the notion of a unified Africa and (2) the presupposition about the natural unity of the colored peoples of the world. It contained the radical and the moderate tendencies which the above groups brought into it. However, in the early years the Organization had a moderate

approach to continental and global policies. It had a strong leaning towards development of individual states.

The OAU serves as an instrument of Africa's foreign policy. Important issues relating to Africa's internal and external relations are discussed by the Council of Ministers (who in reality are the ministers of foreign affairs of their countries)<sup>13</sup> who meet twice a year and review and coordinate policies. The issues and possible solutions are then brought to the Heads of State when they gather for their summit meetings.

In the early years the OAU refused to discuss the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the later years (after 1967), it passed resolutions against Israel, and supported the UN resolutions concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict. The OAU appointed a committee in 1971 to help resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. It was called the Committee of the Wise. Their intensive diplomatic activities between Egypt and Israel regarding the Palestinian question and the occupied lands were fruitless. The Committee reported to the OAU body in 1972 that it had failed. The chronological involvement of the OAU in the Middle East Conflict is documented in Appendix 1.

The above picture describes the patterns of interactions among the actors. The interdependence between various units also reflects an interconnectedness which made nations appear to be more sensitive to the developments within other nations.

For instance, the Western countries were sensitive to Israel's isolation as well as the possibility that the Soviets might be able to increase their influence in the Arab world. Super power rivalry meant that the United States supported Israel in order to limit the Soviet influence in the Middle East region, and was worried about the threat of Soviet military expansion. Some U.S. military strategists were happy to recommend the sale of sophisticated arms to Israel. In addition, because the Israeli intelligence was regarded as excellent, the U. S. was happy to exchange arms for intelligence information on Soviet activities. However, this resulted in the distrust of Israel by Black Africa, and the Arab's ability to capitalize on the U.S.-Israeli relations in their onslaught against Israel.<sup>14</sup>

Black African nations were sensitive to their own need for development assistance as well as their anti-colonial stand and the general concern regarding the occupied territories. Israel was sensitive to her own political isolation as well as to the early development



problems of the Black African nations. The Israelis provided development assistance to Black African nations and for a while reduced her political isolation in return. The Arabs were sensitive to their own need to get world attention focused on the Palestinian question and the need to obtain political allies and votes in the international arena. These various sensitivities led to numerous cooperation schemes and political alliance formations along the lines for friendship and hostility.

In the international arena, the theme of deliberation in the Non-Aligned movement meeting revolved around the condemnation of Western powers for complicity in aggravating international tensions and supporting reactionary regimes in the Third World. For example, Vietnam, South Africa, and the Arab-Israeli conflict were on the agendas and countries were called upon to adopt specific stands on these issues. Israel was put on the same footing as Portugal, South Africa and Rhodesia, as a colonialist and racist state. The Palestinians were put on the same footing as the liberation movements in Africa.

## Geo-Strategic Concerns and Geo-Strategic Actions

### The Africans

When Black African nations decided that they preferred to accept development aid from countries other than former colonial powers, they accepted aid from both the Arab countries and Israel. The Arabs could not compete with the technical assistance that Israel could give to individual African countries. Black African countries accepted aid from Israel in almost all spheres of development concerns.<sup>15</sup> These included: agriculture,<sup>16</sup> medicine,<sup>17</sup> trade,<sup>18</sup> and the military.<sup>19</sup>

Africa's development concerns were not exclusively domestic. These development concerns helped to determine Africa's participation in the international arena. These newly independent countries were ready to move from traditional dependence on the West to find cooperation with the East. They developed a capacity to turn weakness into a form of influence and found ways to fulfil their desires in the arena of development. They signed twenty-one cooperation agreements with Israel between 1960 and 1968.<sup>20</sup>

### Israel

Israel's concern about its political isolation led it to seek various means of finding political allies. Israel offered aid to obtain friendship and political support. Israel did not have substantial financial resources,

but used its skilled manpower—technical, military, agricultural, and educational—to offer assistance to many African nations at a time when they really needed such aid. Israel also needed raw materials (for example, diamonds), and trade partners. It needed to find new sea routes when the Gulf of Aquaba was closed to Israeli shipping. Suitable harbors were also needed to accommodate Israeli shipping when extended trips had to be undertaken. Ghana and other African countries provided the necessary port accommodation.

Within Israel's Ministry of Finance, there was the committee for Overseas Projects. The Committee did not approve overseas projects unless they were politically viable, and favorable or important to furthering Israeli interest.

### The Arabs

Meanwhile, the Arabs opposed Israel's penetration in Black Africa and were actively hostile. They attempted to block the expansion of Israeli influence in Africa. There were thirty-three economic agreements between Arab countries and Africa, nineteen cultural and technical agreements were concluded with non-Arab African countries, trade was expanded to twenty African countries, and many Islamic centers were established in Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Zanzibar and Tanzania.<sup>21</sup> They attempted to caution the newly independent Black African states against accepting aid from Israel, and went as far as boycotting goods from Black Africa that were produced by joint ventures between the latter and Israel.<sup>22</sup>

### Theoretical Analysis

The diplomatic break between Africa and Israel had been attributed to African political opportunism, Arab oil and mounting diplomatic offensive<sup>23</sup>, without taking into account other explanations.

Politics between states most of the time is characterized by cooperation or mild competition. The adversarial nature of the relations between the Arabs and Israel caused both to look to the new African states for political allies. As each state pursued its own goals, other states were relevant only to the extent that they represented opportunities for or constraints on goal achievement.<sup>24</sup> James Spanier uses the game analogy to describe how nations interact with each other in the absence of higher authority. He explains how each state as a player in a competitive game seeks to advance its own interest in conflict with those of other states; that the stakes or pay-offs are critical: survival, or some

degree of security or influence, status or wealth. Each state looks at the world from its peculiar perspective and plans its strategy to enhance its security and its objectives accordingly. He delineates these games as: adversary games, alignment games, preparedness games (arms race), economic games, political and military games.<sup>25</sup> With reference to the Middle East and Africa, all of these games could clearly be observed during those years, 1967-1973.

### When Domestic Concerns Drive Foreign Policy

Under most circumstances, a state is likely to accomplish more of its goals at lower costs if it can develop mutually advantageous cooperative arrangements with other states. The foreign policy of Black African states reflected their pre-occupation with nation building. Their desire to modernize molded their actions. Black African states wanted economic cooperation to combat the poverty of the countries they had inherited from colonial governments. They accepted aid from Israel at a time when they particularly wanted to find alternative sources of support other than the former colonial powers. Their objectives regarding development included not only welfare, but national security—the ability to preserve territorial integrity, physical survival and political independence, thus freedom from foreign control. This led them to seek cooperation, too, in their individual military build-ups.

For a while, the Black African nations kept aloof from the regional politics of the Arab-Israeli problem. They resented the Arab's insistence on pushing the Arab-Israeli conflict on the agenda of the OAU. In 1965, Julius Nyerere, president of Tanzania said, "We are not going to let our friends determine who our enemies are."<sup>26</sup> That same year, President François Tombalbaye of Chad, said, "Chad will not permit herself to become embroiled in the Arab-Israeli dispute. We will strongly oppose any attempt to embroil us in any dispute or turn us into a tool of any country which is interested in exploiting this dispute in its own interest."<sup>27</sup>

When the African states finally formed political alliances with the Arabs, it was partly due to a function of their ideology<sup>28</sup>. Part of this ideology of the newly independent African Nations as duly recorded in the Charter of the OAU, is respect for national boundaries.

### Perceptions

How did Africa's perception of Israel change from that of mutual cooperation in the early years to eventual diplomatic isolation of 1973? Africa's attitude changed from early admiration of Israel, to a

perception of Israel as pro-Western. It was felt that Israel's relations with imperial powers could later turn that country a tool of imperialism. Moreover, they perceived the Israeli-Palestinian situation to be similar to the South Africa apartheid situation.

How did Israel perceive her relations with Black Africa? There seemed to be an Israeli perception that economic partnership, technological and military assistance and training were enough to maintain diplomatic relations.

How did the Arabs perceive their relations with Black Africa? There was a perception that they were brothers in the fight against imperialism.

### Misperceptions

Israeli misperceived the basic philosophies of Black African states regarding territorial integrity. The Africans cherished the principles of integrity and sanctity of borders. Because of their recent colonial experiences, too, they were very sensitive to the right of self determination of a people.

Israel misperceived the growing importance and influence of Muslim populations within Black African states, and even misperceived the limits or constraints put on countries that had large Muslim populations regarding continued diplomatic relations with Israel. Those countries with large Muslim populations were more likely to support the Arab cause due to the emerging Muslim political activism.

Israel also misperceived the impact of the ideology of the radical Afro-Arab groups on the moderate and conservative members of the OAU, and attributed Africa's abandonment of Israel solely to Arab influence. The radical states worked hard to influence the moderate Black African states against having continued relations with Israel.

The Arabs in the early days misperceived that their interest and active participation in Black Africa and within international and regional institutions like the OAU and the UN would be enough to influence African international politics. But they had to wait five years before they were allowed to put the Arab-Israeli conflict on the OAU agenda. Even then, the Arab-Israeli conflict was put on the OAU agenda partly because of the African perception of the Israeli occupation of Sinai as occupation of Africa.

The Arabs also misperceived that beginning and expanding developmental assistance to Black African states in order to contain Israel's growing popularity in the continent would be sufficient to gain sympathy for their cause, both bilaterally, and collectively.

Both the Israelis and the Arabs misperceived Black Africa's pursuit of creating independent foreign policy. It was a foreign policy not only independent of super-powers, but also independent of both the Israelis and the Arabs, and at times definitely in pursuit of each nation's national interest which involved maintaining relations with Israel and the Arabs, and receiving development assistance from both, (1) without taking sides (1960s), (2) while condemning Israel (after 1967), and (3) with each nation rationalizing why diplomatic relations should be broken or not be broken with Israel (1972-73).

### Balancing

Allying with others against a prevailing threat was implemented by Israel in order to curb the threat of Arab influence in Africa by disadvantage. When in the early years, Israel, in search of political allies, gave aid to the newly independent Black African states, it was partially in order to prevent its continued diplomatic isolation. This attempt at "balancing" involves joining the weaker side to increase the influence of the new member in the alliance.<sup>29</sup>

Another type of balancing involves military strategy. When wars (secessionist) broke out in Black Africa, Israel was careful to support the side which was not supported by the Arabs. For example, when Eritrea, a mainly Muslim country, began to fight its secessionist war against Ethiopia, Israel supported the latter, knowing that the Arabs were helping Eritrea. This was a defensive act to prevent the possible creation of yet another Muslim enemy state. Similarly, Israel became involved in the Sudanese civil war, supporting the South against the North, because she knew that the Arabs were supporting the North in its goal to Arabize the dominantly non-Muslim South.

### Aggressiveness and Balancing

Even a state with modest capabilities may prompt others to balance against it when that state is perceived to be aggressive. Consequently, balancing also occurred when the Black African states decided to ally themselves with the Arabs against Israel from 1972 because they perceived Israel to be an aggressor state. The 1967 and the 1973 wars prompted the Black African states to display negative political and diplomatic responses towards Israel. As early as 1967, Sekou Toure, the president of Guinea, accused Israel of aggression when he broke off relations with that country during the 1967 war.

### Offensive Power

Israel's victory in the 1967 war alarmed Arab and African countries. Walt suggests that states with large offensive capabilities are likely to provoke an alliance.<sup>30</sup> Although the diplomatic alliance between the Arabs and the Africans had not yet crystallized, the seeds for future political alliance were sown at that time.

### Bandwagoning

When allies are not available, states will bandwagon. The few Black African states who were hesitant to break relations with Israel in the 1972-73 period, eventually did so because they did not want to be isolated from the consensus of their fellow African states in this matter. Consequently, the last three countries to cut ties with Israel were Liberia, Ivory Coast, and Botswana. These countries had previously voted in favor of Israel in the U.N. when others did not.<sup>31</sup>

### Conclusion

The Arab-Israeli conflict played an important role in initiating newly independent Black African states into world affairs, although other conflicts were occurring inside as well as outside the continent at the same time. These newly independent countries, therefore, played important roles in the United Nations as well as within the OAU, to try to find a negotiated peace settlement between the Arabs and Israel.

The Black African nations, although they might have been influenced at one time or another by Israel or by the Arabs, exercised much self-interest in arranging and implementing their cooperative ventures. Their movement away from the super and colonial powers in their search for development assistance elsewhere, allowed them to accept assistance from both the Arabs and the Israelis. This shows that their foreign policy was an extension of their domestic policies.

The Black states were rational actors. They made choices and selected actions which maximized strategic goals and objectives. Rational choice is value maximizing. The rational agent selects the alternative whose consequence rank highest in terms of goals and objectives.

In looking at the international arena overall, and in examining the goals and strategies of individual nations and groups of nations, it is clear that the self-interest, as well as the interconnectedness of nations

left little room for them to manoeuvre individually. This case study has attempted to show how interests of nations and their actions change over time. Soon after independence, African countries viewed Israel as a friendly nation with which they could cooperate. But in the end, when the philosophical and ideological priorities of African countries were threatened, they meted out punishment or abandonment, but only after trying to mediate a settlement between the two opposing parties.

## APPENDIX

Chronological Involvement of OAU in the Middle East Conflict  
1967-1973

- 1967 A Declaration on the 6-Day War offered Egypt sympathy and said that the members of the OAU were prepared to work within the United Nations to secure the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories.
- 1968 Council of Ministers met in Addis Abba. Prepared a resolution calling for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from the Arab occupied lands in accordance with the UN Resolution 242.
- 1970 The Middle East conflict was included as a separate item on the agenda of the OAU for the first time. A Resolution was passed similar to the first two.
- 1971 OAU Summit. A Resolution was prepared which called for the formation of a Committee of the Wise, to study the Palestine question through contacts with Egypt and Israel, in search of permanent and just peace in the Middle East.
- A Resolution was also passed stating that the continued occupation of Egyptian and other Arab lands constituted a threat to regional peace and security.
- Rabat African Summit. The Committee of the Wise reported that their mission had failed since they could not bring about any peace settlement between the two parties. They were quite critical of Israel's attitude; Another Resolution was passed.
- 1973 Addis Abba Summit. A Resolution was passed stating that the refusal of Israel to withdraw her troops from Arab territories could lead to African states acting individually and collectively to take political, or economic measures against Israel.



## NOTES AND REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>The term "Black African States," is used to distinguish sub-Saharan African states (excluding South Africa) from the Arab states in north Africa. This paper will not deal with the relationship between Israel and South Africa.

<sup>2</sup>Ali A. Mazrui, *Africa's International Relations: Diplomacy of Dependency and Change* (London: Heinemann; Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1977), pp. 130-133. In this book in his chapter, "Africa and the Middle-East," he describes how the history of Arabs in Africa has included a number of contradictions—the Arabs have been both conquerors and liberators, traders in slaves and purveyors of new ideas; they brought Islam and commerce; the cultural impact of Arabs and Africa has included religion as well as linguistics; that the Arabs were accomplices in Africa's enslavement, but became allies in Africa's liberation; the Suez Canal and the Nile river linked Black Africa to the near and the Middle East. Le Vine and Luke further state that, "until well into the middle of the nineteenth century, Black Africa's relationship with the Arab North African littoral and the Middle East hinged on the slow spread of Islam and Arab culture into the Sub-Saharan fringe and coastal East Africa as well as on the ebb and flow of trade between the Arab world and West Africa." Victor T. Le Vine and Timothy W. Luke, *The Arab-African Connection: Political and Economic Realities* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1979), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ali A. Mazrui, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 134-135. The role of the Arabs' changed to become allies of Africa's liberation when Gamal Abdul Nasser, in his *Philosophy of the Revolution*, envisaged Egypt as the center of the three concentric circles—that of the Arab world, the Muslim world, and Africa. Algeria after its revolution and independence from France also actively supported liberation movements in Africa. Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Terramedia: Themes in Afro-Arab Relations* (London: Ithaca Press; Khartoum, Sudan: Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum, 1982), p. 83.

<sup>4</sup>Victor T. Le Vine and Timothy W. Luke, *The Arab-African Connection: Political and Economic Realities*, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>This list excludes Ethiopia and Liberia which were the only two states that were never regarded as colonies.

<sup>6</sup>Mordechai E. Krenin, "Israel and Africa: The Early Years," in Michael Curtis and Susan Aurelia Gitelson (eds.), *Israel in the Third World* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Transaction Books, 1976); and, Ehud Avriel, "Israel's Beginnings in Africa," *Loc cit.*, pp. 69-74.

<sup>7</sup>Arye Oded, *Africa and the Middle East Conflict* (Boulder, Colorado: L. Rienner, 1987), p. 1; Joel Peters, *Israel and Africa: The Problematic Friendship* (London: British Academic Press, 1992), p.2.

<sup>8</sup>Arab countries include north of African countries which are also Arab.

<sup>9</sup>Benjamin Rivlin and Jacques Fomerand, "Changing Third World Perspectives and Policies Toward Israel," in Michael Curtis and Susan Aurelia Gitelson (eds.), *Israel in the Third World*, 1976, p. 348.

<sup>10</sup>Michael G. Fry in his PEW Case Study 126, *The Suez Crisis, 1956*, Pew Case 126, Copyright 1989 by the Pew Charitable Trusts. Distributed by the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Pew Case Studies Center, Georgetown University, Washington, D. C., 1989, pp. 5-10, describes in detail the structural factors of the international system at that time. The situation had not changed much during the period under the present study. The brief description in this paper is compiled from various readings already noted in the general bibliography. It discusses the structure and facts about African nations as groups, international institutions and their roles.

<sup>11</sup>As Black African nations gained independence, they pledged through the OAU to keep the boundaries set by the former colonial powers, although these boundaries were artificial, dividing large numbers of ethnic groups in almost every state. This decision became part of the OAU Charter. Since then, however, many Black African states have continually been threatened by secessionist movements and boundary disputes

<sup>12</sup>Ankush B. Sawant, *Egypt's Africa Policy* (New Delhi: National, 1981), pp. 118-127. The various African groups are discussed here—The Brazzaville Group, the Monrovia Group, the Casablanca Group—their ideology and their voting habits, when and why they were formed. When the OAU was created in 1963, these groups officially dissolved, but they continued to decide foreign policy together, within the OAU, and their radical or moderate stance continued.

<sup>13</sup>It was at the Council of Ministers meeting held in Addis Abba in February 1968 that the Arabs finally succeeded in securing a resolution which condemned Israel as an aggressor state. The resolution which was passed called for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the occupied Arab territories, see Joel Peters, *Israel and Africa: The Problematic Friendship*, 1992, 27-28.

<sup>14</sup>William Quandt, *Decade of Decisions: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 8-9. In this book Quandt explains American Foreign Policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict, using four approaches, (a) the strategic national interest perspective, (b) the domestic policies perspective, (c) the bureaucratic policies perspective and (d) the presidential leadership perspective.

<sup>15</sup>A large number of Israeli programs concerned social development. Many were joint ventures. In most projects Israel contributed the technical know-how in the hotel industry, housing schemes, public buildings, African infrastructure—roads, dams, airports. Samuel Decalo, "African Israeli Cooperation: Pattern of Setbacks and Success," in Michael Curtis and Susan Aurelia Gitelson, *Israel in the Third World*, 1976, pp. 81-99.

<sup>16</sup>Israel helped with agrarian re-organization in some African countries, poultry farming and irrigation were introduced, and agricultural schools were set up.

<sup>17</sup>Israel also provided much assistance in the field of medicine. Clinics were built in Monrovia to combat eye disease and tuberculosis; Israeli medical specialists were

stationed in Ghana; a general hospital was built in Massawa, Ethiopia, while psychiatric and maternity hospitals were built in Monrovia. Michael Curtis and Susan Aurelia Gitelson, *Israel in the Third World*, 1976, pp. 54-68.

<sup>18</sup>Israel began economic cooperation with Ghana as early as 1957 when together they launched the Black Star Line (shipping). Mordechai E. Kreinin, "Israel and Africa: The Early Years," in Michael Curtis and Susan Aurelia Gitelson, *Israel in the Third World*, 1976, pp. 54-68. Trade with Africa for Israel was mainly in primary products, and these included diamonds, and uranium. Joel Peters, *Israel and Africa: The Problematic Friendship*, 1992, pp. 10-11.

<sup>19</sup>Israel helped Black Africa extensively with conventional military training, for the navy, army, and air force. The training of police was also done by Israelis. By 1966, ten African states had received some form of direct military assistance from Israel. Israel built a nautical college in Ghana to provide engineers and officers for the merchant navy. Uganda under Amin received much military training from Israel as well. Abel Jacob documents Israel's military aid to Africa, 1960-66, in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 9, 2, London: Cambridge University Press, 1971, pp. 165-187. See also Joel Peters, *Israel and Africa: The Problematic Friendship*, 1992, pp.6-10.

<sup>20</sup>Joel Peters, *Israel and Africa: The Problematic Friendship*, 1992, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup>Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Terramedia: Themes in Afro-Arab Relations*, 1982, p. 21. Note that it was not until after 1973 that the Arabs began to invest in Africa on a large scale. Before then Arab investment in Black Africa was minimal.

<sup>22</sup>Joel Peters, *Israel and Africa: The Problematic Friendship*, 1992, p. 24.

<sup>23</sup>Joel Peters, *Israel and Africa: The Problematic Friendship*, 1992, p. 55; Helmy Sharawi, "Israeli Policy in Africa," in Khair El-Din Haseeb (ed.), *The Arabs and Africa* (London; Dover, N. H.: Croom Holm; Beirut, Lebanon: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, c. 1985), p. 29.

<sup>24</sup>James N. Danzier, *Understanding the Political World: An Introduction to Political Science* (White Plains, N. Y.: Longman Publishing Group, 1991), p. 255.

<sup>25</sup>John Spanier, *Games Nations Play* (Washington, D. C.: CQ Press, 1993), pp. 10-11.

<sup>26</sup>Joel Peters, *Israel and Africa: The Problematic Friendship*, 1992, p. 22. Later President Nyerere's position changed when he perceived Israel to be aggressive.

<sup>27</sup>*Loc. Cit.* Chad later broke off relations with Israel when the Arabs continued to support the rebel faction in Chad's civil war. It was done in order to reduce the participation of Arab countries in the war. Foreign policy here also reflected domestic concerns.

<sup>28</sup>One goal of states is the protection or promotion of an ideology, which is "a set of beliefs that purports to explain reality and prescribe future existence. . ." (John Spanier, *Games Nations Play*, 1993, p. 99).

<sup>29</sup>Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 18.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 24.

---

<sup>31</sup>Ran Kochan *et al.*, "Black Africa Voting Behaviour in the United Nations on the Middle East, 1967-1972," in Curtis, Michael Curtis and Susan Aurelia Gitelson (eds.), *Israel in the Third World* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Transaction Books, 1976), p. 312.