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Key Judgments

Despite the formal peace agreement between the Israeli and Egyptian governments, a sentiment of hate and distrust towards the Israelis remains a key social norm amongst the upper and lower classes of Egyptian society. The US must pay special attention to all Arab-Israeli peace negotiations to ensure that there is no obstruction of these efforts by the Egyptians in order to maintain the current levels of tension in the area so that it can continue to collect US assistance money. Both sides continue to face the problem of the lack of security along the Egyptian/Gaza Strip borders as illegal arms sales from Egypt to the Gaza Strip continue to increase and those weapons are used against the Israelis. The US must ensure that there remains an incentive to both sides to maintain this peace as it works to promote the increase of shared economic development projects in order to begin to transform the public opinions of the Egyptians to a more positive view of the Israelis.

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Egypt-Israeli Balance Overview

On September 17, 1978 following the twelve days of negotiations Egyptian President Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Begin agreed to a formalized plan for peace negotiations as well as the withdrawal of the Israelis from the Sinai Peninsula. Witnessed by US President Carter, the negotiations came following thirty years of intense Arab-Israeli conflict and showed promise for a peaceful relationship for the future between these two countries. The Camp David Accords outlined a framework for the timespan allowed to Israel for a withdrawal of forces from the Sinai as well as the transfer of authority to a self-elected government by the people of the area.[1] A second framework was outlined describing the conduct of future peace negotiations between Israel, Egypt, and neighboring Arab countries. The Camp David Accords were the first step towards achieving a balance in Middle Eastern relations and it was embraced fully by the US government.

A series of situations that threaten to upset the balance of peace between the Egyptians and Israelis have arisen. The situations include:

- Egypt and other Arab states developing asymmetric and unconventional military abilities because of their inability to compete with the conventional military development of Israel.
- The aversion of the Egyptian government to transforming public opinion of Israel.
- The profitability to Egypt of remaining in the current situation.
- The withdrawal of US aid from Egypt or Israel.
- The smuggling of weapons through the borders of Egypt into the Gaza Strip.

[1] http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/Camp+David+Accords.htm

Conventional Military Balance

Israel's industrial capabilities combined with its effective integration of military services, seasoned military leadership, and the aid of foreign governments (mainly the US) have made it the leading force of the Arab-Israeli governments. Israel currently fields the strongest conventional military force, which includes, but is not limited to, quality of manpower, armor and anti-tank weapons, navy, air force, and artillery. Israel has maintained a high level of military expenditures in the 1997-2009 timeframe as compared to its Arab neighbors.[2] Israel supports a seasoned defense force that goes through extensive reality based training. What constitutes reality style training is unknown. In addition, Israel's defense industry has matured enough to support its current force requirements and it has developed a recapitalization strategy that effectively implements aid from foreign governments (mainly the US) to help modernize Israeli forces.

Egyptian defensive spending has progressively declined following the peak of 1984 at 13.7% of GDP to the 2008 levels of 2.1%; less than half of the GDP percentage spent by Israel on defensive forces.[3] According to the report issued by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), "Egypt has become reliant on US military assistance to fund its military development." Its inability to adequately support its large military forces with proper weaponry, functioning air craft, and proper training make it an inferior fighting force compared to the Israelis. Due to Egypt's inability to compete with the conventional forces of Egypt, it has sought to develop its unconventional military weaponry.

[2] http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/Camp+David+Accords.htm
[3] http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/Camp+David+Accords.htm

Future repercussions of military build-up as well as the continued Egyptian sentiment of inequality of conventional forces with Israel will promote the use of unconventional warfare tactics, as demonstrated later in the report.

Figure 7: Arab-Israeli Other Armored Fighting Vehicles (Light Tanks, OAFVs, APCs, Scouts, and Reconnaissance Vehicles): 1973-2010
(Numbers of major combat weapons)

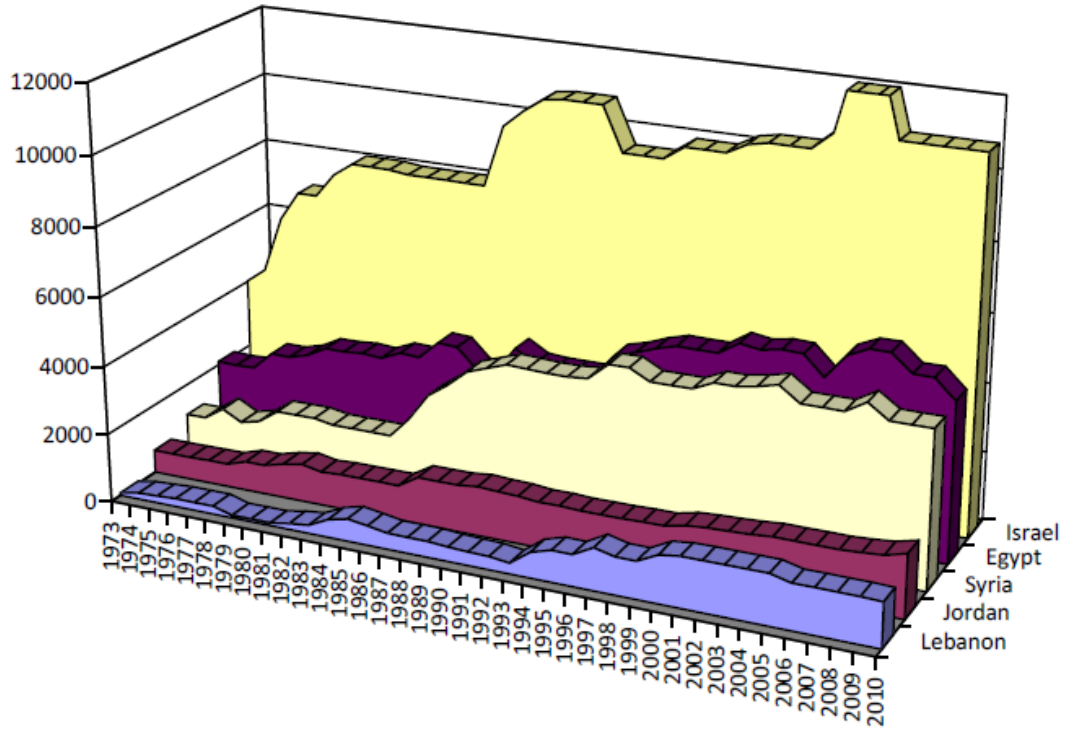
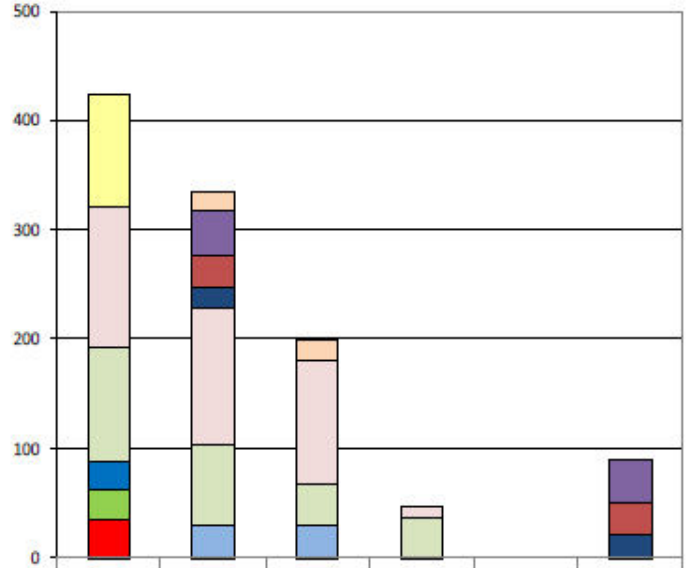


Figure 15: High-Quality Operational Arab-Israeli Combat Aircraft in 2010
(Does not include stored, unarmed electronic warfare or combat-capable RECCE and trainer aircraft)



	Israel	Total Arab	Egypt	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
Mirage 2000		18	18			
Mig-29		40				40
Mig-25		30				30
Su-24		20				20
F-16I	102					
F-16C/D	129	124	113	11		
F-16A/B	106	74	38	36		
F-15I	25					
F-15C/D	28					
F-15A/B	34					
F-4E		29	29			

Cold Peace

The promised continual progression of the peace between Egypt and Israel following the Camp David Accords have stagnated due to a lack of effort on behalf of the Egyptian government to promote positive views of an Egyptian-Israeli peace amongst its own population. Egyptian society still demonizes Israel through public mediums such as government newspapers, music, and leadership conferences in which Israel is criticized. The song "I love 'Amr Musa (general secretary of the Arab League) and I hate Israel" was the most popular song in Egypt in

2001. Egypt views Israel as "its main rival for regional hegemony and a dangerous competitor for the benefits of peace."[4]

Maintaining the current levels of peace is the main concern of the Egyptian government. "Egypt extracts clear political benefits from its mediating role, but it has a structural interest in making sure that peace never spreads."[5] Egypt has taken on an obstructive policy of diplomacy, in which they seek to disrupt the peace processes between Israel and other Arab countries. Following the 1994 peace agreements between Israel and Jordan, Egypt ran a campaign opposing all possible economic development projects between Arabs and Israelis such as the development of a common market place. Efforts for Palestinian-Israeli peace were destroyed following the influence of President Mubarak who convinced Yassir Arafat, president of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, to not sign any agreements with Israel.

Any further peace with Israel or any less can quickly manifest itself into less aid from the US for Egypt. Tensions with Israel remain a high source of revenue for Egypt. Should the current behavior remain permissible, the peace between the two states will continue to diminish and the US may be funding a future cold war between Egypt and Israel.

Weapons Smuggling and Unsecured Borders

The current situation of weapons smuggling from Egypt to the Gaza Strip is worsening as the weapons being smuggled into the Gaza Strip are being used in asymmetrical attacks conducted by Hamas and other terrorist organizations who share a common hatred of Israel.

[4] Egypt and Israel: A Reversible Peace
[5] Egypt and Israel: A Reversible Peace

Israel has demanded that Egypt do more to secure the borders as well as to destroy the networks of tunnels being constructed for smuggling purposes. Egyptian government continues to violate their agreement to assist in securing their borders by permitting and in cases assisting Palestinians in their crossing of the borders as well as the smuggling of arms. Egypt has denied these allegations and has accused Israel of exaggerating the problem in order to obstruct aid coming from the US. Egypt feels that they have been unable to fight the increase in illegal arms sales because of a lack of resources in Egypt, in-sufficient troops along the borders, and the heavy increase in tunnel building over the last decade.

Number of Tunnel Openings Discovered by Egypt 2004-2007

2004	20
2005	25
2006	73
2007	119

The US has investigated the issue by sending an investigation team composed of one state department and one defense department official. The team has proposed a series of countermeasures to be carried out by Egypt in order to control the problem of illegal arms smuggling. The countermeasures include:

- The United States provide Egypt with sophisticated tunnel-detection and demolition equipment, such as unmanned ground vehicles and acoustic sensors, to improve Egypt's tunnel detection capability;
- Egypt construct a canal along the border; an idea that Israel had proposed two years earlier;
- New physical barriers be erected with piles driven deep into the earth;
- The United States, Egypt, and Israel establish a trilateral security commission that would deal with all the issues related to the Gaza-Egypt border - weapons

smuggling, border crossings by terrorists, and border control. Israel, however, opposes such a commission.

The US has re-allocated $23 million in aid to Egypt towards the purchasing of advanced tunnel detection equipment and continues to monitor progress of the issue. Strict supervision of Egyptian efforts to secure the border are essential to preventing the erosion of the peace between Israel and Egypt. Israel in the past has resorted to any method it has deemed necessary to the protection of its own citizens and should the attacks continue and the situation worsen, Israel will most likely take military action to resolve the issue and cause irrevocable damage to the peace process.

High Tension

Currently Israel remains unaccepted in the Arab world and the Egyptian leadership and society continue to harbor resentment towards Israelis. Egyptian conventional military weakness and the Egyptian search for identity in the growing world, combined with the problems facing the economy and social system, are leading to the continued use of hatred against Israel as a main element of national unity. Egypt will continue to encourage if not support the asymmetrical warfare being conducted by terrorist groups as Egypt realizes that meeting Israel on the battlefield in conventional style warfare would not present a favorable outcome for Egypt. The only restricting element in preventing war between Israel and Egypt appears to be US aid. According to Amin al-Mahdi, an Egyptian writer and intellectual,

> A regime that does not consider peace as a tool in service for its public but as a means for promoting its own political interests or to please the West or to gain some economic points, will retreat from peace once its expectations from that peace do not materialize.

US aid, which once accounted for nearly 10% of the GDP for both Israel and Egypt has decreased significantly to account for less than 1% of Egypt's GDP and less than 2% of Israel's. Currently both Egypt and Israel share the same distaste for returning to war. This should not be seen, by the US, as evidence for strong bonds of peace between Israel and Egypt. The US should invest in other peace supporting methods to promote a change in the Egyptian leadership and the Egyptian populace.

In order to prevent the future collapse of the peace efforts up to this point, measures must be taken to soften the Egyptian public opinion towards a peace with Israel. As the social and economic structure continue to present a problem in Egypt, a method of increasing the peace without causing problems for the regime would be to research possible cooperative economic ventures within the Arab-Israeli community, as mentioned earlier in the report. Active steps taken by the government to increase the number of jobs in the country would be seen positively. In addition, the US's strict supervision of the enhancement of the Egyptian-Gaza strip border control would benefit Israeli-Egyptian relations while decreasing the traffic of illegal arms.

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