

50th ANNIVERSARY

SIX-DAY WAR

FRAMING POINTS

- The 1967 War was a transformative event in the history of Israel and the Jewish people. Surrounded on all its borders and threatened with annihilation, Israel emerged after just six days of battle with a decisive military victory against the combined armies of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon. The war also created unresolved challenges with which Israel grapples to this day.
- Both the U.S. and Israel were built in large part by stubborn idealists, including those who had fled war and oppression. Both of our nations also have flaws. But because our founders planted strong seeds of democracy, we can always pursue a better world. Our nations exist because people before us refused to be constrained by the past or the difficulties of the present. The U.S.-Israel relationship is based not only on interests, but also on these deeply-held values we share.
- After 19 years during which Jerusalem was divided, Jewish holy sites were desecrated, and Jewish access to them was denied, the war resulted in the city's reunification. Since 1967, Israel has respected the right of all peoples to visit their holy sites, subject to security requirements, and this right must continue to be maintained.
- Both before 1967 and thereafter, Israel has never ceased struggling to achieve peace with its neighbors, making painful sacrifices including the removal of settlements and military forces from strategically important areas. A peace treaty with Egypt was forged in 1979, and Israel withdrew from the Sinai. Despite numerous crises, the treaty remains intact and provides an important source of stability in the region. Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1994, which has led to vital security cooperation in the face of threats to both nations.
- The Six-Day War left Israel in control over the lives of millions of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza. This situation has caused enormous trauma and suffering on both sides. The late Israeli leader Shimon Peres observed that "the Jewish people weren't born to rule over another people."
- In the pursuit of peace and reconciliation, Israel has engaged in direct negotiations with Palestinian leaders since 1993 and forged interim agreements leading to territorial concessions. Despite tensions, terrorism, and other difficulties, Israel has developed a working administrative and security relationship with the Palestinian Authority. Israel

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further unilaterally disengaged from Gaza in 2005, with the aim of improving the situation for Palestinians on the ground.

- Despite numerous efforts over the years, a peace agreement between Israeli and Palestinian leadership has proven to be elusive. Many, including former U.S. President Bill Clinton, point to numerous peace offers that Israel has accepted and Palestinian leaders have rejected since 1947. Tied to this are terrorism and the refusal of Palestinian leaders to recognize the right of the Jewish people to self-determination in their homeland. Others focus on Israeli policies, such as the building of settlements in the West Bank.
- The 50th anniversary of the Six-Day War is an occasion to reaffirm strong support for the vision of two states for two peoples, a vision endorsed by the international community and the only just solution: a democratic Jewish State of Israel existing side-by-side in peace and security with an independent state of Palestine.
- While the current environment has not been conducive to peace initiatives, it is hoped that Israel and the Palestinians can resume negotiations leading to a comprehensive conflict-ending agreement resolving all outstanding issues, including borders, refugees (both Palestinians and Jews from Arab states), security, settlements and Jerusalem. As always, U.S. assistance in facilitating these negotiations will be vital.
- This is a time to intensify support for efforts by Israeli and Palestinian civil society leaders to build an infrastructure of peace from the ground up through people-to-people initiatives. Such efforts may provide impetus to pursue diplomatic solutions, and will serve to anchor any future agreements.
- Beyond the Palestinian issue, a wider peace between Israel and the Arab world would significantly bolster efforts to confront extremism and violence in the region fomented by Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas, ISIL, and others.

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