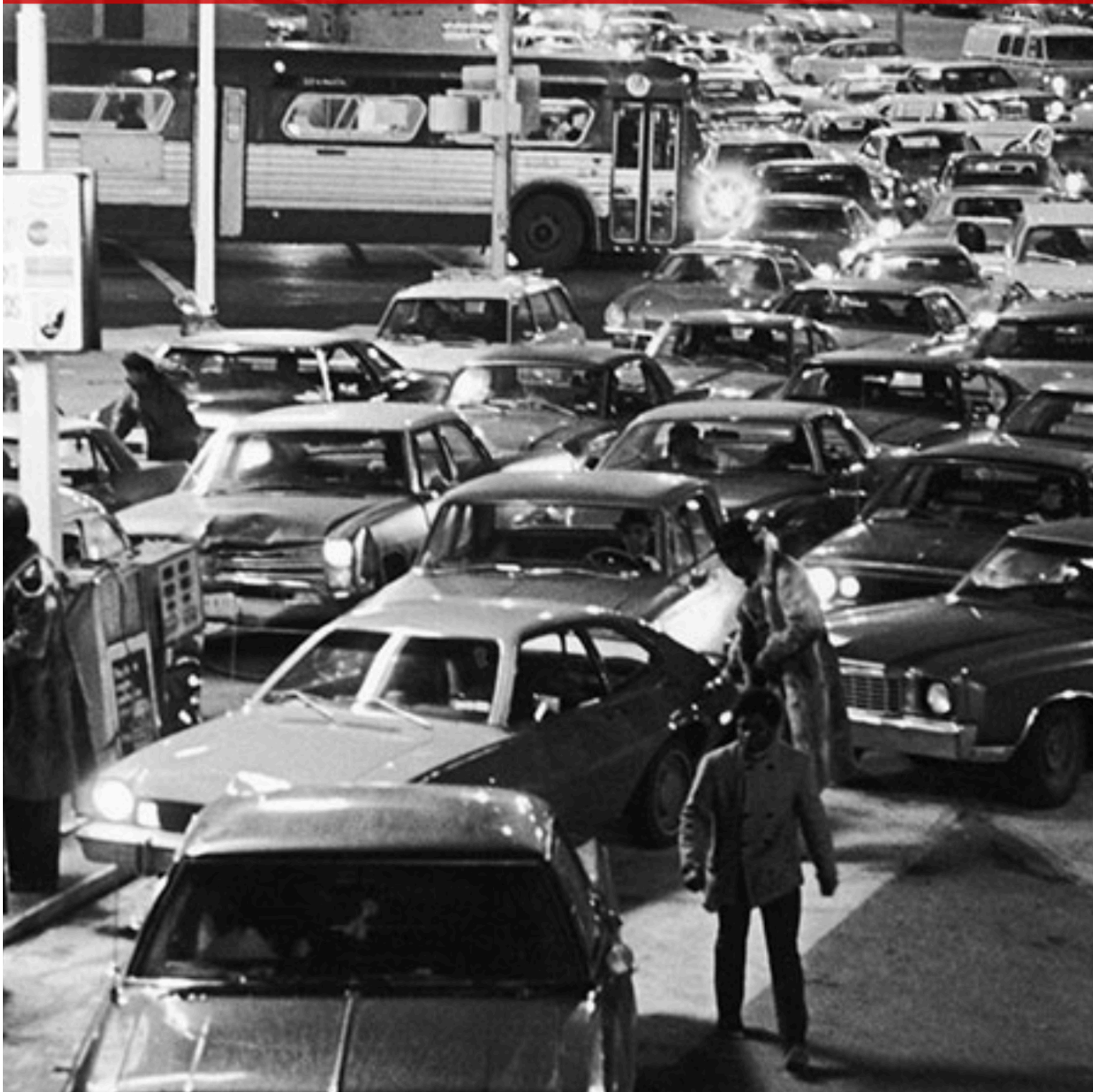




Historical Committee

Discussing measures to mitigate the impacts of the 1973 Oil Crisis



Chairs: Lorenzo Mendes and Mafe Almeida

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LETTER TO THE DELEGATES

Dear Delegates,

I am Maria Fernanda Almeida, from the Swiss School of São Paulo, and I could not be more honoured to have the opportunity to chair this Historical Committee alongside Lorenzo! Having always been a fan of History and debating, I couldn't ask for a better committee and topic for my last conference as a high school student. If you ever feel overwhelmed by the debate, just remember that ups and downs are a part of growing, and us Chairs are here to help you overcome it.

My name is Lorenzo Mendes, from the Swiss School of Curitiba, and I am very happy to be part of this very exciting experience. Together with Maria Fernanda, I hope to have a wonderful time with all the delegates. Debating was always one of my passions, and being able to transmit this feeling and meet other people with the same passion is incredible. I hope we can engage in a respectful and balanced debate, where every delegation's voice carries the same weight and importance in shaping our discussions.

We are very eager to see how you will conduct this debate, and we hope we can offer all the support needed for its negotiations to be as fruitful and peaceful as possible. If you have any questions about the intricacies of diplomacy, debating, or simply the vocabulary, don't hesitate to reach out to us!

Sincerely, your Chairs

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COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION



The United Nations General Assembly is one of the UN's oldest and most important organs, responsible for the discussion of any international issues that may fall under the UN Charter. The UNGA was formed in 1945. Is the only committee in which all member states have equal representation in power and votes. This allows for the council to tackle the most varied subjects, such as international law, peace and security, human rights, sustainable development, and economic and social issues.

The General Assembly's responsibilities are defining the UN budget, appointing the non-permanent Security Council members and the Secretary-General, receiving and analyzing reports from other components of the UN, and establishing subsidiary organs to assist the UN's mission. Moreover, the UNGA's resolutions are not legally binding, but they have great political impact, as they have been conceived by one of the UN's most respected organs. The Assembly may make recommendations on any matter under the UN's jurisdiction, except those concerning peace and security that fall specifically under the Security Council's consideration.

In the context of this Historical Council, having the General Assembly as the committee of choice is important because it allows delegates to explore the many



nuances of the topic being discussed. According to the Charter, the United Nations has four purposes; to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations, to cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights, and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations. This committee should be able to respect all of those purposes and embody diplomacy and peacemaking.



PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Rules Governing Debate

1. *Agenda*: The first order of business for a committee, if the committee views it as necessary because of the broadness of the topic of discussion, is setting the agenda.
2. *Most important points and motions*:
 - 2.1. *Point of Personal Privilege*: Whenever a delegate experiences any type of impairment to their ability to participate in the debate, they may ask for a point of personal privilege to request that the issue be corrected.
 - 2.2. *Point of Order*: During the discussion of any matter, a delegate may ask for a point of order to indicate an instance of improper use of the parliamentary procedure.
 - 2.3. *Point of Parliamentary Inquiry*: When the floor is open, a delegate may ask for a point of parliamentary inquiry to ask a question regarding the Rules of Procedure to the Chairs.
 - 2.4. *Point of Information*: After a substantive speech, the speaker can entertain points of information as long as they wish to respond to them. In the case of points of information being entertained, the Chairs will recognize a specific number of delegates to rise and state a question about the specific content of the speech previously held. Delegates who make points of information should not yield the floor back to the Chairs or the speaker.
 - 2.5. *Right of Reply*: A delegate whose personal or national integrity has been hurt by another delegate during a speech may request a Right of Reply. The Reply should take the form of a thirty-second speech.
 - 2.6. *Motion for a Moderated Caucus*: Delegates must specify the total time period for the caucus, individual speaking time, and topic. The Chairs will then recognize delegates in the discussion following a speaker's list.
 - 2.7. *Motion for an Unmoderated Caucus*: When making this motion, delegates must specify the length and purpose of the caucus. Unmoderated caucuses are an opportunity for delegates to have



informal discussions and move around the committee room, ideally for the writing of Resolutions.

2.8. *Motion to Move into Voting Procedure:* When the committee feels that the topic has already been sufficiently discussed, it is possible to motion to close the debate and move into voting procedure. This motion passes if it is seconded and there are no objections.

2.9. *Motion to Cite Sources:* If a delegate doubts that a fact stated by another delegate is incorrect, they may make a motion for the citation of sources used to the Chairs, who will decide if the motion is in order or not. The Chairs will also decide whether the source is credible or not.

3. *Resolutions:* A Resolution may be introduced after it receives the Chairs' approval, and is signed by 3 Main Submitters and at least 5 Co-submitters. Co-submitters do not need to support a Resolution; they only want it to be discussed. The main Submitters should be the main writers of a Resolution, and can co-submit other Resolutions.

3.1. *Introducing Resolutions:* Once a Resolution has been approved a delegate may make a motion to introduce the Resolution. This motion requires authorization by the Chair, and does not require voting. The Chair will ask one of the main submitters of the Resolution to read its operative clauses. A Resolution will remain on the floor until the debate is postponed or it has been voted on.

4. *Amendments:* Delegates may amend any Resolution that has been introduced. An amendment must have the approval of the Chairs. All amendments on the floor must be debated and voted upon, which may vary depending on time constraints, and relevance of the submitted amendments

4.1. An approved amendment may be introduced when the floor is open. General debate will be suspended and two speakers will be recognized, one in favor and one against the amendment.

4.2. A friendly amendment is a change to the resolution that all Main Submitters agree with. A friendly amendment must be called by a



motion, and if there are no objections by the Main Submitters, the amendment will automatically be incorporated into the resolution.

- 4.3. When the debate on the amendment finishes, the Committee will move to an immediate vote. Votes on amendments are substantive votes, and a two-thirds majority is needed to pass an amendment. After the last amendment is entertained and voted on, the Committee will proceed to vote on the Resolution.

Further Points, Motions, and instructions on procedure and formatting can be found in the official SMUN [Handbook](#). Model resolutions, position papers and speeches can be found in the official [SMUN Website](#), but in case of any doubt, please contact the Chairs.



TOPIC: Discussing measures to mitigate the impacts of the 1973 Oil Crisis



Historical background

Zionism and the Aliyahs

The term Zionism comes from the Hebrew word Zion, a hill in Jerusalem, widely referring to the Land destined for the Jewish people in the form of Israel. This ideology was created in the 19th century by Theodor Herzl, an Austro-Hungarian Jewish journalist and activist, who, through his pamphlet "Der Judenstaat" (The Jewish state), shared his visions of the need to create a Jewish homeland to protect the Jews from antisemitism suffered mainly in Europe during that time. Jews faced discrimination, violence, and pogroms, violent organized riots or attacks directed at Jews, in many parts of Europe, which fueled the desire for a safe homeland. Through time, more people became adept to this ideology, and by the beginning of the 20th century, the Zionist movement sought to establish a Jewish state in Palestine, which was under Ottoman rule during that time.

The First Aliyah, spanning from 1881 to 1903, marked the initial significant wave of Jewish immigration that was formed by followers of the Zionist ideology and Jews that came mostly from Eastern Europe, which combined formed



approximately 25,000 immigrants to Ottoman Palestine, driven by a combination of factors such as anti-Semitic persecution, economic hardship, and political instability in Eastern Europe, particularly in the Russian Empire. The First Aliyah was characterized by the establishment of agricultural settlements known as "moshavot" or "kibbutzim" by Jewish immigrants. These settlers aimed to claim the land and cultivate it, embodying the ideals of labor, Zionism, and self-sufficiency. This first attempt failed, as the immigrants ran out of funds and often had to return to their countries of origin due to the harsh living conditions.

The Second Aliyah, spanning from 1904 to 1914, was composed by 35,000 immigrants, this time coming especially from the Russian Empire and Yemen towards Palestine, still under Ottoman rule. Unlike the First Aliyah, which predominantly focused on agricultural settlement, the Second Aliyah brought with it a wave of immigrants influenced by socialist and Zionist ideals. Motivated by a desire for social justice, economic opportunity, and the realization of the Zionist vision of a Jewish homeland, these immigrants sought to establish not only agricultural communities but also urban-based cooperative ventures and socialist institutions. One of the most significant outcomes of the Second Aliyah was the establishment of several communities, including the city of Tel Aviv.

British Intervention and Arab Revolts

The Balfour Declaration, issued on November 2nd, 1917, by Arthur James Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary at the time, was a significant policy statement that expressed the British government's support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine. This declaration was addressed to Lord Walter Rothschild, a prominent leader of the British Jewish community, and it marked a turning point in the history of Zionism and the eventual creation of the state of Israel.

The Balfour Declaration emerged during World War I, a period when the British government was seeking support from various communities to bolster its war efforts. Strategically, the British hoped that by supporting Zionist aspirations in Palestine, they could garner favor with Jewish communities in key Allied countries, particularly the United States and Russia, and strengthen their position in the war. Politically, the declaration aimed to rally support from Jewish



organizations and influential figures who could help advance British interests in the Middle East.

The Balfour Declaration was met with both enthusiasm and opposition. For Zionists, it was seen as a historic endorsement of their aspirations for a Jewish homeland in Palestine and a validation of their long-standing efforts to secure international recognition. However, for Palestinians and other inhabitants of the region, the declaration represented a betrayal of their own national aspirations and rights to self-determination. The ambiguity of the declaration's language regarding the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine sowed the seeds of future conflicts and tensions between Jews and Arabs in the region.

In the aftermath of World War I, the Balfour Declaration was incorporated into the Mandate for Palestine, which was entrusted to Britain by the League of Nations in 1922. This mandate provided the legal framework for British administration of Palestine and facilitated Jewish immigration and settlement in the region. This declaration stated that the British government viewed with good eyes the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

Between 1920 and 1948, Palestine was under British command after the support shown through the Balfour Declaration. The territory of Transjordan was also covered by this mandate, but as it wasn't included in the declaration, different rules were applied to it. After the Balfour Declaration, the Bolsheviks took control of Russia, creating a civil war. From 1918 to 1921, a series of mass murders of Jews, better known as pogroms, led to the death of more than 100.000 Jews and displacement of over 600.000 of them, causing more than 40.000 of these refugees to head towards Palestine until 1923, in what is known as the Third Aliyah.





On March 20th, 1920, delegates from Palestine attended a general Syrian congress at Damascus, which passed a resolution rejecting the Balfour Declaration and elected Fayṣal I—son of Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī, who ruled the Hejaz—king of a united Syria (including Palestine). This resolution echoed one passed earlier in Jerusalem, in February 1919, by the first Palestinian Arab conference of Muslim-Christian associations, which had been founded by leading Palestinian Arab notables to oppose Zionist activities. It is important to keep in mind that any measure against this could be received as a violation of Middle Eastern sovereignty.

The periods of 1924-1929 and 1929-1938 marked the Fourth and Fifth Aliyah, respectively, and were responsible for more than 300,000 immigrants. Throughout all of the British mandate, Arab riots took place constantly, such as in 1936, when the Great Revolt, a popular nationalist uprising made by the Arabs started, with the intents of dethroning British command and attacking Jews in general, while also demanding Arab independence at the end of the uprising immigration progress in the region.

The Arab population resented British policies, which they believed favored Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine, leading to economic displacement and demographic changes in majorly Arab areas that had been controlled by third parties for a long time. The Arab Revolt erupted in 1936, sparked by a combination of factors, including Arab frustration with British policies, grievances over land ownership and employment opportunities, and the



influence of pan-Arab nationalism. The revolt was characterized by widespread protests, strikes, and acts of sabotage against British authorities, Jewish communities, and institutions perceived as collaborators or beneficiaries of British rule.

The Arab Revolt was marked by violent clashes between Arab rebels and British security forces, as well as between Arab and Jewish paramilitary groups. The British responded with a heavy-handed crackdown, deploying military reinforcements and implementing emergency measures, including curfews and martial law, to quell the rebellion.

One of the defining features of the Arab Revolt was the emergence of Palestinian national leadership and grassroots mobilization, embodied by figures such as Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, and the Arab Higher Committee. These leaders sought to unite Palestinian Arabs behind a common cause and demand an end to British rule and Jewish immigration.

The Arab Revolt of the 1930s ultimately ended in 1939 with the outbreak of World War II and the British government's decision to shift its focus towards appeasing Arab states in the Middle East, particularly in light of the strategic importance of oil reserves in the region. The revolt left a legacy of bitterness and resentment among Palestinians and Arabs towards the British and the Zionist aspirations, contributing to the deepening of the Israeli-Palestinian.

The Founding of Israel and subsequent Arab-Israeli Wars

The Arab-Israeli War of 1949 marked the start of a defining chapter in the tumultuous history of the Middle East. It highlighted years of conflict between different ethnic groups under British protectorate, as well as the diplomatic intervention by foreign nations before and after the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 through the UN Resolution 181. Often referred to as the First Arab-Israeli War, the War of Independence from the perspective of Israel, and as the Nakba ("catastrophe") by Palestinians, this conflict reshaped the political landscape of the region and laid the groundwork for decades of subsequent hostilities.

Against the backdrop of the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947, which recommended the division of British-ruled Palestine into separate Jewish and



Arab states, tensions between those communities reached a critical point. The declaration of independence by the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, was met with immediate opposition from neighboring Arab states, such as Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon, who viewed the establishment of Israel as a violation of Arab sovereignty and the rights of the Palestinian people.

The Arab-Israeli War of 1949 unfolded in a series of military engagements, ceasefires, and diplomatic initiatives, as both sides sought to assert their territorial claims and secure their national aspirations. From the initial skirmishes in late 1947 to the armistice agreements signed in 1949, the conflict witnessed battles over strategic locations, including Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, the Negev desert, and the West Bank, with significant human and material costs on all sides.

Another relevant conflict preceding the 1973 Oil Embargo was the 1967 Six-Day War, or the Third Arab-Israeli War, from which Israel emerged victorious. Said victory counted on the capture of the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank, Old City of Jerusalem, and Golan Heights. Later, these territories became a central point of conflict between Arabs and Israelis, leading to international intervention in the form of the UN Resolution 242, which called for Israel's withdrawal from the captured territories.

The Yom Kippur War and the Oil Embargo

The Yom Kippur War (1973) was named after a Jewish holiday that goes by the same name, which takes place on the 6th of October, the date of the first strike. The conflict was initiated by Egypt and Syria after years of isolated instances of fighting due to Israel's non-compliance to the terms of Resolution 242. The strike was successful in its objective of being a two-front offensive with the element of surprise and quickly began exhausting Israel's reserve in munition and armament. The conflict escalated into another sphere with reinforcements from the United States and the Soviet Union towards Israel and the Arab countries, respectively.

The emergency supply line established by the U.S. President Richard Nixon, while effective, found a great obstacle in the Oil Embargo imposed by the OAPEC. The embargo successfully achieved its goal of undermining the American influence on the conflict, as many of the U.S.'s allies were heavily impacted by the



rising prices of oil. As a consequence, the aid offered by Nixon had to surpass harder restrictions on the way to Israel. However, the American influence on the conflict was essential for the advantage Israeli forces gained over the Syrian and Egyptian troops, which were reduced.

In the face of such a high scale conflict, the UN Security Council intervened with multiple resolutions that called for an immediate ceasefire. Resolution 338, issued on the 22nd October 1973, consisted of a three line resolution that proved itself insufficient to end the conflict. Resolutions 339 and 340 were adopted on October 23 and 25, respectively, and reiterated the need for an immediate ceasefire and start in negotiations. After much international pressure, the Yom Kippur War ended on the 26th October 1973, but regional tensions remained, and so did the embargo.

By the start of 1974, the price of oil had increased by four times its value before the embargo, seeing as Saudi Arabia, one of the OAPEC members, held about 25% of the world's oil production. The price spurt had direct consequences to the industries and populations of the target countries, mainly the U.S., Portugal, the Netherlands, and Japan, but the effects soon spread to other countries not directly involved with the embargo. Industries reliant on oil faced difficulties with the costs, while civilians could sometimes not access oil for transportation or heating. The increase in prices quickly led to a period of economic recession with exorbitant inflation.

Current situation

By February 1974, the war had already reached an end, but the OAPEC embargo and its consequences still remained. The Middle Easterns searched for the promised peace of their lands, while the countries affected by the restrictions sought ways to stabilize their economies and persuade the Arab countries into lifting the embargo. Western powers, not satisfied with their reliance on Middle Eastern exports, had started to look for energy alternatives for oil. While not in direct conflict, some Middle Eastern territories were still occupied by Israeli forces, which further complicated the circumstances for a definitive end for the embargo.



The Oil crisis generated by the Yom Kippur War highlights the importance of mitigating long existing conflicts, as they will resurface until the ethnic and power struggles involved get sorted out, and the maintenance of peace becomes something tangible. The crisis also draws attention to the unbalanced power in letting few countries determine the energy policies of the entire world, as well as the dangers of imperialistic policies.

Timeline of events

1881-1903 - First Aliyah

First major wave of Jewish immigration to Ottoman Palestine, driven by anti-semitic persecution, economical hardship and political stability in Eastern Europe.

1904-1914 - Second Aliyah

New immigrants, influenced by socialism and zionism, establish the foundations of Jewish self-governance and cities like Tel Aviv

November 2, 1917 - Balfour Declaration

Britain expresses support for a Jewish national home in Palestine, creating tensions with Arab communities.

1920-1939 - Arab Revolts and Further Aliyahs

Tensions escalate under British Mandate; Arab protests, mass Jewish immigration and land acquisition.

May 14, 1948 - Founding of the State of Israel

Proclaimed after the UN Partition Plan; neighboring Arab states declare war, initiating the First Arab-Israeli War.

1949 - Armistice Agreements

Israel consolidates territory; hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are displaced.

June 5 - 10, 1967 - Six-Day War

Israel captures Sinai, Golan Heights, West Bank and Gaza; Resolution 242 calls for withdrawal, cultivating further regional tensions.

October 6, 1973 - Yom Kippur War begins

Egypt and Syria launch a surprise attack on Israel on Yom Kippur, initiating a large-scale conflict.



October 17, 1973 - OAPEC announces the oil embargo

Arab oil producers cut production and embargo pro-Israel nations, starting with the U.S. and the Netherlands.

October 22-25, 1973 - UN Resolutions 338, 339, and 340

Call for ceasefire and peace negotiations; attacks end on October 26.

November - December, 1973 - Oil prices quadruple

The economic impact increases globally; Western economies enter recession and talks begin to solve the crisis.

January 18, 1974 - Israel and Egypt sign disengagement agreement

Mediated by U.S. diplomacy; key condition to ending the embargo.

Positions of major nations and blocs

United States of America

The United States, under President Nixon administration, was a prime target of the 1973 Arab oil embargo (imposed by OAPEC) because of its firm support for Israel in the Yom Kippur War. Washington publicly denounced the embargo as an “oil weapon” used for political blackmail. U.S. policymakers immediately started to progress in Arab-Israeli peace talks. National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger began intense shuttle diplomacy in November 1973, intermediating an Egypt-Israel disengagement by January 1974, a move that would help convince Arabs to lift the embargo. Domestically, the crisis severely strained the economy. The Nixon administration imposed fuel rationing and speed limits to conserve gas, and announced a new energy policy in April 1973 to boost domestic production. U.S. inflation and unemployment were rising, highlighting the fragile balance Washington had to manage between supporting Israel and maintaining ties to Gulf oil producers.

Portugal

Portugal's Salazar/Caetano dictatorship closely aligned with NATO, and it had permitted the U.S. to use the Lajes air base in the Azores to supply Israel. Because of this cooperation, OAPEC specifically cut Portugal's oil supply in late 1973. With oil accounting for a very relevant part of their energy, the embargo



caused sharp domestic shortages in Portugal. The government described the embargo as a hostile act by the Arab states, while seeking help from western allies. Internally, Portugal was already under severe pressure, with colonial wars going on in Angola and other African regions, the economy was very hurt. And by early 1974 the regime faced rising strong opposition. The crisis, therefore, combined cutoff supplies and inflation with a weakening dictatorship.

The Netherlands

As a Western ally perceived as a pro-Israel state, the Netherlands was explicitly punished by the embargo. Arab members of OPEC extended the embargo to include the Netherlands alongside with the U.S., Portugal and South Africa. Dutch oil imports were clogged and the government faced immediate energy shortages. The administration responded with emergency rationing and called European neighbors for assistance. Economically, the Netherlands were badly exposed, it imported most of its oil, and the increase in the prices triggered a severe inflation. The Dutch position in international forums was to condemn the punitive use of oil and call for a peace settlement in the Middle East (to end the embargo), while also managing severe logistical and economical constraints.

South Africa

Apartheid South Africa also fell under the Arab embargo due to its perceived support to Israel and Western allies. They viewed the embargo as an unfair collective punishment. The government had no diplomatic resources to the UN (due to their segregational regime), so it just quietly maintained relations with some western countries for relief. Domestically, South Africa faced fuel shortages and sharp inflation. Politically their government's anti-communist stance aligned with Israel and NATO, so it naturally supported U.S. efforts to end the embargo. This crisis weakened an already isolated economy (with high military spending under apartheid), highlighting the regime's vulnerability.



Rhodesia

The unrecognized Rhodesian regime (under Ian Smith), just like South Africa, was targeted by the OAPEC embargo as a supporter of Israel and the apartheid system. Oil supply was cut off, worsening the colony's international isolation and economic situation. Rhodesia was already lacking funds due to earlier UN sanctions, and now had more difficulties. In practice, it was dependent on clandestine oil routes via South Africa and Portugal's African territories. The crisis deepened fuel shortages in Rhodesia, increasing inflation and weakening an already weak economy by prolonged guerilla war and lack of global recognition.

Japan

Japan, which was heavily dependent on Middle Eastern oil (about 40% of its supply), was directly targeted by the embargo. Although not being formally aligned, Japan was seen as a U.S. ally, and Arab states wanted Tokyo to join their stance. U.S. historical documents note that Saudi Arabia urged Japan to support the Arab position publicly and call for a settlement of the Israeli conflict. The Tanaka government declared an energy emergency in response to the crisis, like fuel-saving measures (e.g. encouraging conservation). Because Japan had diversified some imports, the embargo took some time to hit, but by early 1974 they faced high inflation and slower growth. Officially, Tokyo balanced its ties to Washington and the West with diplomacy toward Arab nations. It pushed for a ceasefire and quietly gave signs of being against the Israeli occupation if that meant restoring the oil supplies.

Canada

Canada, a Western oil producer, was also hit by the OAPEC embargo. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's government agreed with other allies and condemned the embargo. In September 1973, Trudeau had called for a voluntary Canadian price freeze in response to rising global oil prices, after that he imposed an export tax on oil to keep domestic prices low. These measures showed Canada's unique position, as a major exporter and an importer. Politically, Canada supported Israel



in the UN but was cautious, emphasizing the need for negotiations. Canadian officials participated in some meetings in Washington, arguing that an Arab-Israeli settlement should come before the full normalization of oil supplies. The economy was held by Alberta oil, but still faced inflation, due to the global prices. By March 1974, Canada's stance was of mediation, seeking Arab cooperation while backing allies security actions.

Israel

Israel was able to withstand the Yom Kippur War and viewed the embargo as an extension of Arab aggression. Although Arabs naturally excluded Israel from the embargo, Israel's interests were obviously to end the crisis. Prime Minister Golda Meir's government struggled to maintain supplies as American aid planes turned back toward home bases on September 25. Israel's official position in March 1974 was to welcome any diplomatic initiative that could resume Arab oil regular supply, essentially trying peace negotiations to relieve the embargo. Jerusalem argued that lifting the oil embargo should come with an Arab withdrawal from occupied territories (Sinai and Golan) as a matter of justice. Economically, the war had already strained Israel's treasury (which soon needed a \$ 2.2 billion U.S. aid package), so the high oil prices and anything that blocked trades proposed risks to the country. In short, Israel supported American and European pressure to push Arab producers toward peace and also had to deal with domestic fuel shortages.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Britain, under a conservative government of Edward Heath, saw the embargo as a hostile action against the western bloc. The UK was heavily dependent on Middle Eastern oil, so the crisis immediately raised fuel prices and created shortages. The administration started oil-conservation measures. Schools and factories were closed on some Fridays, a 70 km/h national speed limit was imposed, and citizens were told to heat only one room. In the Parliament, It was mentioned that the government had "faced a total Arab oil embargo" in 1987, highlighting the need for preparation. Officially, the UK joined the U.S. in



demanding an end to the embargo. Britain tried to maintain dialogue with Arab leaders to protect future supplies. Domestically, the UK was in a recession, the shock affected many industries and the embargo also contributed to the election defeat of Edward Heath in 1974. In sum, London's stance was to condemn the embargo, implement rationing and support Western efforts for a cease-fire.

France

France, led by Georges Pompidou, wanted a more independent policy. The French government had closer ties with Arab countries than other western powers, and in 1973 they hoped to avoid any embargo restrictions on their supplies. France was not initially affected by the Arab oil aloof and continued receiving oil mainly from North Africa and other allies. However, the government decided to raise fuel prices and prepared plans for the case in which they were targeted. By March 1974 the French position was very double-sided, it demanded an Arab-Israeli ceasefire (to stabilize the markets) while also chasing implicitly supporting OPEC's price changes as a correction from past underpricing. But tried to avoid the French consumers to face the worst effects. Economically, France suffered from a 10 percent inflation by early 1974 and quadrupling oil prices. However, they managed to balance their western alliances while still maintaining their influence in the Arab world and not abandoning Israel entirely.

West Germany

West Germany, a heavy oil importer with reliant industries, felt especially vulnerable. They relied on oil from both OAPEC and Eastern Europe, and analysts were warning that Germany's dependence on North African/Arab oil meant it would "feel the pinch" early if supplies were cut. The Brandt government (SPD) started conservation efforts, it stimulated car-free Sundays, minimized industrial oil usage, and invested in nuclear and coal power projects. German politics were divided, the Social Democrats were concerned about the Arab markets, but the opposition insisted that Germany should strongly back Israel. In international forums, West Germany supported allied calls to end the embargo, while cultivating ties with oil states. In sum, West Germany's position combined the



support of U.S.-led peace initiatives to lift the embargo, with domestic energy conservation.

Iraq

Baathist Iraq was a decisive member of OPEC and generally backed the Arab oil weapon. Iraqi oil ministers joined the October 16 price hike (with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, etc.) increasing the posted price by 17%. Rather than cutting production, Iraq actually raised the output during the embargo, selling oil at the higher price. Baghdad viewed the crisis as leverage to advance Arab unity and to drain U.S. support from Israel. Politically, Iraq used the extra revenues to boost military spending and Arab influence and also aligned with Egypt and Syria against Israel. Domestically, the economy benefited from the price spike. Overall, Iraq's official position was in full solidarity with the Arab producers, it endorsed using oil diplomacy as a means to pressure the West, and it participated in OPEC decisions throughout late 1973 and early 1974.

Iran

Iran, under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, played a key role in the OPEC price negotiations. In October 1973, Iran joined the oil cartel's initial price increase and production cut alongside Saudi Arabia and others. However, unlike the Arab monarchies, the Shah did not support an actual embargo of Western countries. Instead, he pushed aggressively for much higher prices. And indeed, post-war analyses state that the Shah was "the leader who pushed the most for higher oil prices". Iran thus capitalized on the crisis by increasing exports and profits. The sudden wealth funded the Shah's ambitious "Great Civilization" modernization plans. Geopolitically, Iran (not directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict) used its position to strengthen its alliance with Saudi Arabia, but still maintained ties with the U.S. By March 1974, Tehran's stance was to maintain OPEC selling oil at higher price levels even as the OPEC embargo itself was ending. Domestically, Iran's economy boomed (though inflation rose), and foreign policy focused on securing its energy-based prosperity rather than on the Arab-Israeli fight.



Kuwait

Kuwait, as a founding OPEC member and close Saudi ally, actively joined the October 1973 cartel actions. At a Kuwait City summit on 16-17 October, its oil ministers agreed with Riyadh and other Gulf states to raise posted prices and cut production. Kuwait also reinforced the embargo by publicly aligning with Saudi policy: for example, on November 7 the Kuwait government declared Japan "non friendly" over its wartime neutrality, resulting in a production cut for Japan. The oil embargo benefited the Kuwaiti economy a lot, it financed massive infrastructure and social projects under Amir Sabah. The Kuwait leaders publicly declared the embargo as a temporary political tool that would be lifted following an Israeli withdrawal. In March 1974, Kuwait's position was supportive to OAPEC's policies, but would restore normal exports once the political objective (Israeli pullback) was met.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, under King Faisal and Oil Minister Ahmed Yamani, was the driving force behind the embargo. Riyadh spearheaded the initial October 16 price and cut decision, and on October 17 the Arab oil ministers publicly declared an embargo against Israel's supporters. When the U.S. aid to Israel was intensified, Saudi Arabia immediately joined with Libya to embargo exports to the Americans. Throughout late 1973, Saudi policy emphasized that only the withdrawal of Israel would end the embargo. However, by late December, Yamani began to give signs that he would ease the cuts, he announced a 10% OPEC production increase on December 25, 1973, as diplomatic progress (Egyptian withdrawal from the Suez) unfolded. In sum, Saudi Arabia's official stance was combative initially (using the "oil weapon" to back Egypt and Syria), but when the Arabs achieved partial peace, Riyadh steered OPEC back toward higher production and price stabilization, showing its influence.



Venezuela

Venezuela, a non-Arab OPEC oil state, responded in a different way. Its president, Carlos Andrés Pérez, had campaigned on capturing oil wealth for “La Gran Venezuela”. Unlike the Arab producers, Venezuela did not join the embargo, instead it boosted output and took advantage of the world's higher price. Caracas cooperated with the OPEC price increases (implicit support for producers interests) but sold oil to any buyer, using the extra revenue for domestic projects. Politically, Venezuela supported strong ties to the U.S. and Europe. By early 1974, Pérez was proposing “project nation” initiatives funded by the oil surplus. Thus Venezuela's stance was to back OPEC's pricing cartel, but was acting on its own export strategy, not participating in the political embargo itself.

Egypt

Egypt (President Anwar Sadat) had launched the 1973 war and pressed for full Israeli withdrawal. Lacking its own oil, Egypt sided entirely with the Arab producers' strategy. Egyptian policy defended that an embargo should remain until Israel left occupied Sinai. In January 1974 Egypt achieved an Israeli pullback to the east bank of the Suez Canal. This progress was used to negotiate the end of the embargo. Indeed, Arab leaders (including Sadat) met on February 12-14, 1974 with their oil allies (Algeria, Syria, Saudi Arabia) to coordinate oil policy. Domestically, Egypt's economy was strained by the costs of war and inflation. Officially, by mid-March 1974, Egypt supported the lift of the embargo alongside its Gulf partners.

Syria

Syria was the other key confrontational Arab nation. Like Egypt, Syria had little oil and thus fully endorsed the embargo pressure on Israel. Damascus coordinated closely with its allies. President Hafez al-Assad participated in the mid-February 1974 meeting on oil strategy. The Syrian stance was to insist on political gains (withdrawal from the Golan Heights) in exchange for ending oil warfare. Syria's economy was barely damaged by the embargo, it welcomed



Soviet arms supplies (the USSR had been its principal supporter during the war). In international forums, Syria maintained a hard line. It demanded that Israel faced heavy costs. However, by mid-March 1974 Assad also gave signals of willingness to accept the lifting of the embargo.

Soviet Union

The Soviet Union supported the Arab position and benefited indirectly from the crisis. Moscow was the main arms supplier to Egypt and Syria. The Kremlin viewed the embargo as a welcomed strategy against the U.S. and its allies, higher oil prices boosted Soviet export revenues as well. Unlike the OAPEC, the USSR did not officially join the embargo, but it shared the Arab's goal of minimizing U.S. influence. Soviet oil production (one of the world largest) remained steady, and Soviets supported the embargo. By mid-March 1974, the USSR acted as a behind-the-scenes power, supporting the partial peace and maintaining strong ties with all Arab states.

Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates joined its Gulf neighbors in the embargo. Abu Dhabi's oil minister was among those who on 16 October raised the posted price to \$3.65/barrel and announced production cuts. The UAE had limited spare capacity, but its leaders unequivocally backed Saudi policies. In November they labeled Japan "non friendly" (to pressure Japan to criticize Israel) and accepted a production reduction for Japan. The oil windfall enriched the emirates and funded Sheikh Zayed's development plans. UAE showed the embargo as a temporary show of Arab unity, to be lifted once Israel changed its policies. Officially, they showed that they would support any move of the OAPEC regarding the end of the embargo.

Ecuador

Ecuador (a small OPEC member since 1973) followed its fellow exporters' approach for economic gain. Quito did not participate in the Arab embargo



decisions (it is non-Arab), but it benefited from OPEC's price increases. Ecuador's government that was under military rule, supported higher oil prices to capture revenue. The new oil money helped stabilize the economy and fund state projects in petroleum-rich Amazonia. Diplomatically, Ecuador aligned with other non-OPEC exporters (like Mexico) calling for market stability. In short, Ecuador's position was to quietly accommodate the embargo's effects (it was not targeted) while benefiting financially from the higher world oil prices.

Libya

Libya, under Colonel Muamar Gaddafi, was one of the most militant supporters of the embargo. Tripoli proclaimed an oil embargo on the United States (and later other Israel allies) when the conflict intensified. Gaddafi's government pushed for the highest possible price and the strictest application of the embargo. For instance, Libya refused to ship any oil to the West even when other producers eased the restrictions. Like the other Arab oil states, Libya quadrupled the regular posted price and cut production to enforce the embargo. Domestically, Libya used the crisis to invest in military and development projects. In summary, Libya's official stance was to strongly back the use of oil as a political weapon and resisted any demands until Israel had met Arab terms.

Jordan

Jordan adopted a cautious stance during the crisis. King Hussein sent limited forces to Syria in order to maintain Arab solidarity. However, Jordan did not support or implement the oil embargo. Hussein's government publicly supported Arab political aims, because Jordan was dependent on financial aid from the Gulf oil producers. However they avoided direct confrontation. In short, Jordan's priority was economic survival and maintaining regional balance rather than engaging in oil diplomacy.

Lebanon

Although Lebanon was a member of the Arab League, it played no military role in the 1973 Yom Kippur War and did not participate in the OAPEC oil embargo. Lebanon's government gave symbolic support for Arab causes, but its



main focus was economic stability. In summary, Lebanon maintained neutral relations with the West and Arab oil states, and quietly benefited from an increase in capital inflows from Gulf countries.

Guiding questions

1. Was your country involved or affected by the embargo? Why?
2. Who was the leader of your country at that time? What was their position towards the situation?
3. How did your country collaborate with the negotiations?
4. Does your country have enough financial resources to aid any side of the conflict?
5. What were the key military, economic, and political developments during the early stages of the Oil Embargo and how did they impact the regional dynamics?
6. How did the involvement of foreign states affect the course of the conflict, and what were their respective objectives and strategies?
7. What measures can be taken to facilitate peace negotiations and promote a sustainable resolution to the conflict?
8. What actions can be taken to prevent the spread of violence and extremism in the region in the aftermath of the conflict?
9. What steps can be taken to foster dialogue and mutual understanding between the parties involved in the Yom Kippur War?

Further research

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