Prescribed Subject 2: The Arab-Israeli Conflict 1945–79

THE PALESTINE MANDATE, ARAB STATES AND ISRAEL 1945–56

This Prescribed Subject addresses the development of the Arab-Israeli conflict from 1945 to 1979. You will need to know and understand the importance of the role played by foreign powers in the conflict. You will also need to be able to understand the background to the conflicts and be aware of the causes and consequences of the four wars between the Arabs and the Israelis, which occurred in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973. You will also have to be aware of the various political, social and economic issues that have arisen between the Palestinians, the Arabs and the Israelis and how these have affected the inhabitants of the region. Also covered is the nature and extent of social and economic developments within the Palestine Mandate/Israel within the time period and their impact on the regions’ populations. Although the end date for the Prescribed Subject is 1979, it will be useful for you to study what has happened since 1979 in order to decide whether or not any of the issues that led to the first war between the Arabs and the Israelis in 1948 have been resolved.

This particular chapter will discuss the historical and religious background to the Arab-Israeli conflict and analyze the consequences of World War I on the region. It will then examine the reasons behind the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and the consequences this had for Zionists, Palestinians and Arabs. Finally, this chapter will look at the reasons behind the outbreak of the 1956 Suez War and the consequences that this crisis had for the Middle East.

Timeline – c.1000 BCE –1956

Note: BCE = Before Common Era

- **c.1000 BCE** Creation of the Kingdom of Israel
- **66–73** Romans destroy Jerusalem
  - **570** Mohammed, prophet of Islam, born in Mecca
  - **638** Jerusalem and Palestine under Islamic rule
- **1896** The Jewish State is published by Theodor Herzl
- **1897** First Zionist Congress in Basle
- **1914** Outbreak of World War I
- **1915** McMahon–Hussein Letters
- **1916** Sykes–Picot Agreement
- **1917** The Balfour Declaration promises a national home for the Jews in Palestine
- **1918** World War I ends
- **1920** San Remo Conference – mandates approved
- **1921** Transjordan, the eastern part of Mandatory Palestine, promised to Abdullah
- **1923** League of Nations approval of British and French mandates
- **1929** Arab riots
- **1933** Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany
- **1935** Nuremberg Laws passed in Germany
- **1936** The Arab Revolt breaks out in the Palestine Mandate
- **1937** The Peel Commission visits the Palestine Mandate
- **1938** Peel promises a two-state solution
- **1939** The Mufti rejects the White Paper that promises Arab control over immigration
- **1940** Stern Gang formed
1942 The systematic mass extermination of Jews commences in occupied Europe
Biltmore Conference in New York
1945 League of Arab States formed
1946 Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry report published
1947 UNSCOP Report: second partition of the Palestine Mandate into Jewish and Arab states
1948 Arab-Israeli War: the State of Israel proclaimed by the Jews during the War of Independence
The Nakba brings defeat, flight, expulsion and exile for many Palestinian Arabs
1949 First Israeli elections — Ben-Gurion becomes Prime Minister
1950 France, Britain and the USA agree to restrict arms sales to Middle East
1952 Officer’s coup in Egypt
1954 Nasser becomes leader of Egypt
1955 Gaza Raid
Czech Arms Deal
1956 Suez Crisis; Eisenhower Doctrine

Section I:
Context and background for the Arab-Israeli conflict

There have been many explanations given for the conflict between the Arabs and Israelis over what will be called Israel and the Palestine territories, or the Palestine Mandate in these chapters, a conflict that developed in the early 20th century. Contributing factors include competing national aspirations, limited resources, religious ideologies, security concerns and lack of trust.

Around 1000 BCE, a Kingdom of Israel was formed through a merging of 12 tribes under one king, Saul. This kingdom later split into two, with Judah in the south and Israel in the north. The northern Kingdom of Israel was invaded by the Assyrians in 722 BCE. In 586 BCE, the Babylonians conquered the Kingdom of Judah and exiled the leadership to Babylon. In 539 BCE, this Babylonian kingdom was overthrown by Persia, and the Jews returned to Judah, later called Judea after 330 BCE. In 63 BCE, Judea was invaded by the Romans and in 70 CE, after a Jewish revolt, Jerusalem was taken and its Temple was destroyed. The Romans’ punishment for an uprising in 135 was merciless. Thousands were killed. The name Judea was banned and the land became known as Syria Palaestina, which is where the name Palestine comes from. Many Jews were forced to live in the Diaspora and Jews were temporarily banned from living in Jerusalem.

In 312 CE, the Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity. By the end of the century, Christianity was the official religion of the empire, and Syria Palaestina was regarded as “The Holy Land” where Jesus lived, preached, died, and was resurrected. The Roman Empire, typically called the Byzantine Empire in this period, lost control of the region to Muslim Arabs, who began to spread from the Arabian Peninsula in 632. By the middle of the 7th century, the Arabs controlled Palestine.

Judaism (the Torah), Christianity (the Bible), and Islam (the Koran) have strong religious connections to the area that is today Israel and the Palestinian territories. Sometimes, these religious connections contribute to the conflict between Arabs and Israelis. For example, some people believe that God promised the area to the Jews. Others believe that God requires the land to be under Muslim rule.

ToK Time
What is an historical fact?
Most Europeans know that the battle of Hastings took place in AD 1066 (AD is now often termed Common Era or CE). But this simple statement has a few problems. First, the battle took place a few kilometres away from Hastings at a site called Senlac Hill. Second, the date 1066 is actually inaccurate, as it is based on a dating system that was changed in the 18th century. Third, the term AD or CE is a Christian dating system that has little relevance in a world that is predominantly non-Christian. How does this simple analysis influence what you take to be an historical fact?
What is clear is that there has been no continuous dispute between the Arabs and the Israelis since ancient times. The conflict that exists today is essentially a modern conflict involving Arab and Jewish nationalism, with its roots in the late 19th and early 20th century. The origin of Jewish nationalism, or Zionism, in Western Europe is usually traced back to the publishing in 1896 of *The Jewish State* by Theodor Herzl. Zionism had existed among the Jews of Poland and Russia beforehand, but Herzl popularized the idea of the founding of a Jewish state. The Ottoman Empire had controlled Palestine for centuries, although there had been some Jewish emigration in the 1880s. The First Zionist Congress, held in Basle in 1897, defined Zionism’s aim as follows: ‘Zionism seeks to create for the Jewish people a legally secured homeland in Palestine.’

The Congress resolved, among other decisions, to implement the following:

1. The organization and uniting of the whole of Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, both local and international, in accordance with the laws of each country.
2. The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and national consciousness.
3. Preparatory steps toward obtaining the consent of governments, where necessary, in order to reach the goals of Zionism.

The effect of World War I on the region

It would take 50 years for Herzl’s dream of an Israeli state to become reality, and only after a lengthy and bloody struggle. The catalyst for the establishment of Israel is to be found in the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and its consequences after 1918.

During World War I, the Ottoman Empire was allied to the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary against Britain, France and Russia. It became obvious to these three Allied powers that any attempt to destabilize the Middle East would seriously weaken the Ottoman Empire’s military capability. In 1915, Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner for Egypt between 1915 and 1917, promised Sharif Hussein that ‘Great Britain is prepared to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within the limits demanded by the Sharif of Mecca,’ with a number of areas specifically excluded.

In June 1916 the Arabs declared war on the Ottoman Empire. Later, Britain and Arab leaders would disagree about whether or not the region of Palestine was excluded. Secretly, however, in October 1916 Britain and France, in the Sykes–Picot Agreement, decided that they would divide the land occupied by the Ottoman Empire between themselves after the end of the war.

Britain wanted to try to obtain control of Palestine from the Ottoman Empire to reinforce its strategic position in the Mediterranean, securing access to the Suez Canal and India.

At the same time, Britain made a policy statement in favour of Zionist goals. The British Cabinet hoped that ethnic Jews in allied and neutral governments would respond to the declaration by supporting its war effort. The Cabinet hoped that this statement would help sway the American president to bring the United States into the war and persuade ethnically Jewish revolutionaries in the Russian Provisional Government to continue fighting the Central Powers. In addition, many British leaders had long believed that Zionism was a
just cause. On 2 November 1917, the following declaration was sent by the British Prime Minister to Lord Rothschild, one of the foremost British Zionists.

**SOURCE A**

Dear Lord Rothschild,
I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty’s Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,
Arthur James Balfour

This letter became known as the Balfour Declaration. When World War I ended in November 1918 with the defeat of the Central Powers, including the Ottoman Empire, the British government had to decide which of the three contradictory statements they had made would be their policy. Not surprisingly, both the Arab leaders and the Zionists believed that Palestine had been promised to them. Britain and France had already decided that they would take over the territories, as proposed under the Sykes–Picot agreement, ignoring Arab and Zionist claims. The seeds of the Arab-Israeli conflict had been sown.

The League of Nations and the Mandated Territories

The future of the defeated Central Powers was decided at the Paris Peace Conferences that were held between 1919 and 1923. One decision, based on a memorandum written by General Jan Smuts, was that some form of territorial adjustment was needed to deal with the territories that belonged to Austria-Hungary, Russia and Turkey. Smuts proposed that these should be put under the administration of the League of Nations. His plan met with some objections, although the principle of a mandate (stemming from the Latin *mandatum*, where property was entrusted to people for safekeeping) was adopted for Germany’s former colonies and the non-Turkish parts of the Ottoman Empire. As we saw in Chapter 2, Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations set up three types of mandated territory, which later became known as the A, B and C Mandates.

**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**QUESTION**

Look back at the Article 22 quotation in Chapter 2 (page 45). What are some difficult words? It is important that you understand what the implications of the League of Nations mandates were to be. Look up any word you do not know and then attempt to paraphrase in three or four sentences the intention behind the setting up of mandates.

**Sharif Hussein**
Sharif and later Emir of Mecca, the Muslim holy city, between 1908 and 1917. During World War I, the Turkish-dominated Ottoman Empire allied with the Central Powers against the Triple Entente. Sharif Hussein allied with the British and French, initiating the Great Arab Revolt in June 1916 against the Ottomans with the idea of creating an independent and unified Arab state in the Middle East.

**Sykes–Picot Agreement**
An agreement named after a British and a French diplomat, who signed the agreement that determined British and French spheres of influence in the Middle East.

**Jan Smuts**
Smuts was a Prime Minister of South Africa between 1919 and 1924 and later from 1939 until 1948.
The mandatory power had the ‘dual mandate’ of administering the territory and ensuring that all nations had equal access to these territories. At a ‘Supreme Council’ meeting in San Remo attended by Britain, France, Italy and Japan on 25 April 1920, it was decided that France would be given a mandate over Syria, while Britain was to receive the mandates over Iraq and Palestine. Britain and France were to report regularly to the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations (see Map 8).

Thus, Britain and France went back on the promises they had made during World War I and, in essence, adopted the Sykes–Picot Plan of 1916.

Britain found itself in something of a dilemma, as it was responsible for addressing competing Arab and Jewish goals. The mandate clearly reflected the Balfour Declaration of 1917, with its promise of a ‘National Home for the Jewish People’ allowing Jewish immigration into the Palestine Mandate. It also required that Britain establish two self-governing bodies, one for the Jews and one for the Arabs. Autonomy would naturally favour the Arabs as they comprised the majority of the population. In 1918 Gilbert Clayton, the head of British Military Intelligence, estimated that there were 512,000 Muslims, 61,000 Christians and 66,000 Jews in the Palestine Mandate. Any establishment of a self-governing Arab state would certainly prohibit the establishment of a Jewish state in the Palestine Mandate. The British Government largely abandoned its support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine in the 1920s as the Balfour Declaration and administration of the mandate became difficult. Its attitude towards Zionism was summarized by Lord Curzon, its Foreign Secretary, who had opposed the Balfour Declaration from the start. Curzon’s understanding was not an accurate assessment of Jewish aspirations, but it is a clear statement of the anti-Zionism of many in the British government in the 1920s. During discussions on the terms of the Palestine Mandate Curzon wrote in 1920:

*The Zionists are after a Jewish state with the Arabs as hewers of wood and drawers of water. So are many British sympathizers with the Zionists. Whether you use the word Commonwealth or State that is what it will be taken to mean. That is not my view. I want the Arabs to have a chance and I don’t want a Hebrew State.*

From Ritchie Ovendale, *The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Wars*, 2004

In June 1922, a White Paper was published by the British government and passed by the House of Commons. It was to be the basis of British policy towards the Palestine Mandate for the next 10 years.
Unauthorized statements have been made to the effect that the purpose in view is to create a wholly Jewish Palestine. Phrases have been used such as that Palestine is to become ‘as Jewish as England is English’. His Majesty’s Government regard any such expectation as impracticable and have no such aim in view. Nor have they at any time contemplated, as appears to be feared by the Arab delegation, the disappearance or the subordination of the Arabic population, language, or culture in Palestine. They would draw attention to the fact that the terms of the Declaration referred to do not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home, but that such a Home should be founded ‘in Palestine’.

From the White Paper of 1922

The British mandate between 1922 and 1939

Between 1922 and 1928, the status of Transjordan under the mandate was resolved. After 1922, Britain administered the part west of the River Jordan as Palestine, and the part east of the Jordan as Transjordan, although legally they were part of a joint mandate. In May 1923, Transjordan was granted limited independence, but by 1928 Transjordan was still not fully independent, as the British still maintained some administrative control there. A key factor behind this decision was the building of an oil pipeline from Iraq through Transjordan to ports in Palestine. This situation continued until 1946, when Transjordan became fully independent under the rule of King Abdullah and, after the 1948 war, Transjordan was renamed the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Iraq was the only British mandate to become fully independent between 1920 and 1935. In 1929, Britain made a recommendation to the League that Iraq should be released from the mandate and be allowed to become an independent state. The Mandates Commission appointed a committee to investigate whether Iraq met the conditions for statehood, having sufficient financial resources to provide a functioning government. On 3 October 1932, the mandate in Iraq ended and the country became a fully fledged member of the General Assembly of the League of Nations.

Meanwhile, in the Palestine Mandate the relative calm was ended by Arab riots. Sparked by fears that Zionists wanted to control the Western Wall in Jerusalem, Arabs attacked Jews across the mandate in August 1929. In one week, 133 Jews were murdered and 116 Arabs were also killed, mostly by British troops and police. The British sent two commissions to investigate, which concluded that Arab concern at the extent of Jewish immigration into the Palestine Mandate was the root of the problem. The commission suggested limiting Jewish immigration to 10,000 per annum.
immigration. This was strongly opposed by the Zionist movement, which campaigned against this recommendation. This eventually caused the British Government to back away from quotas for almost a decade, which in turn angered the Arabs.

In January 1933, Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany and passed the Enabling Act of March 1933, establishing his Nazi dictatorship with its clearly anti-Semitic policies, as outlined in Hitler’s book Mein Kampf. Hitler began to exclude Jews from many areas of public life and by 1935, after the proclamation of the ‘Reich Citizenship Act’ and the ‘Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour’ at Nuremberg, it was clear that more extreme anti-Semitic measures were to follow. By 1938 attacks on Jews became common, culminating in Kristallnacht (the Night of Broken Glass), a coordinated attack against Jews and Jewish businesses across Germany. This resulted in a wave of Jewish emigration that, accompanied by further anti-Semitism in Poland and Romania, led to a flood of refugees. The USA and almost every other country placed restrictions on the number of Jews allowed entry, which meant that the Palestine Mandate became the only option for many emigrants. By 1936 Jewish immigration into the Mandate had resulted in an increase in their numbers to 370,000 out of an Arab population that had increased even more to 1.3 million. The Arabs feared that further Jewish immigration would result in the establishment of a Jewish state. In 1936 the Mufti of Jerusalem called for a general strike in protest against Jewish immigration. The British government sent a commission under Lord Peel (a Conservative Party politician) to investigate. The commission resulted in the publication of a 1937 report, which was to lay the framework for the future. It introduced the idea of partition.

**SOURCE C**

The advantages to the Arabs of Partition on the lines we have proposed may be summarized as follows:

(i) They obtain their national independence and can co-operate on an equal footing with the Arabs of the neighbouring countries in the cause of Arab unity and progress.

(ii) They are finally delivered from the fear of being swamped by the Jews, and from the possibility of ultimate subjection to Jewish rule.…

The advantages of Partition to the Jews may be summarized as follows:

(i) Partition secures the establishment of the Jewish National Home and relieves it from the possibility of its being subjected in the future to Arab rule.

(ii) Partition enables the Jews in the fullest sense to call their National Home their own; for it converts it into a Jewish State. Its citizens will be able to admit as many Jews into it as they themselves believe can be absorbed. They will attain the primary objective of Zionism – a Jewish nation, planted in Palestine, giving its nationals the same status in the world as other nations give theirs. They will cease at last to live a minority life.

From the Peel Commission Report, 1937

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**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**QUESTION**

What do you think the reaction of the Arabs and the Zionists would be to the Peel Commission’s report?

The Arabs protested vigorously against what they saw as a grave injustice. This protest then spread into a full-scale Arab revolt in October 1937, which resulted in the dispatch of 20,000 British troops to the Mandate at a time when the situation in Europe was rapidly deteriorating. It was at about this time that the Munich Conference of 1938 had resolved the question of the Sudetenland in Hitler’s favour, and it was becoming more and more clear that war was imminent. The British knew that they would need Arab support in any war with Germany and were afraid that the Arab states might even ally with Hitler against Jewish interests. In some areas, there was concern expressed that the Arabs were being forced to accept changes in the Mandate because of events elsewhere in the world. George Antonius’
The Arab Awakening argued it was unfair to make the Arabs in the Palestine Mandate a scapegoat of Hitler’s policies. He argued that it was the Arabs who were being persecuted rather than the Jews. It was in response to these claims that the Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald produced a White Paper in May 1939 which was strongly pro-Arab.

**SOURCE D**

His Majesty’s Government believe that the framers of the Mandate in which the Balfour Declaration was embodied could not have intended that Palestine should be converted into a Jewish State against the will of the Arab population of the country...

...(1 a) For each of the next five years a quota of 10,000 Jewish immigrants will be allowed, on the understanding that a shortage in any one year may be added to the quotas for subsequent years, within the five-year period, if economic absorptive capacity permits...

...(3) After the period of five years no further Jewish immigration will be permitted unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it...

From the MacDonald White Paper, May 1939

**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**QUESTION**

Read through Sources B, C and D again. Is the British government being consistent in the policies it is following? You should try to imagine how the Arabs and Zionists are viewing the changing direction of the policies of the British government.

The 1939 White Paper was rejected by both the Arabs and the Zionists. The former demanded independence and a complete halt to Jewish immigration. The latter protested that its terms contradicted the mandate and that the mandate was a needed refuge for Jews fleeing Nazi Europe. The apparent change in British attitude to favour greatly unlimited Jewish immigration and the outbreak of World War II were to have a key effect on Zionist opinion of the mandatory power, Britain.

The effect of World War II on the region

Germany’s invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939 was the spark that caused World War II, when Britain and France declared war on Germany on 3 September. Some Arabs such as the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem collaborated with Hitler while events in Germany made it essential for the Zionists to join the Allied forces. Despite their irritation at the inconsistency of the British, it was obvious that a truce had to be called to deal with the greater threat of Nazi Germany. A Jewish legion was created from Palestinian Jews despite their opposition to the White Paper, and fought against Hitler in the Middle East. Nazi oppression increased in Europe and the Endlösung or ‘Final Solution’ was decided upon by Hitler after the invasion of the Soviet Union in July 1941. This was finalized in January 1942 at the Wannsee Conference near Berlin and the plight of European Jews became all too clear. The full extent of the genocide carried out by the Third Reich against the Jews only became evident when the Allies liberated the camps and obtained access to Nazi documents and archives. After the end of World War II in Europe (8 May 1945), the number of Jewish immigrants into Palestine increased significantly.

One important consequence of Hitler’s Holocaust, with its murder of more than six million Jews, was to strengthen the Zionist call for the establishment of a Jewish state in the Palestine Mandate for the survivors of the concentration camps. The mandatory power, Britain, was bankrupt after the war and was faced with a disintegrating empire. It was clear that it was only a matter of time before Britain would have to give up control over its mandate.

**Final Solution**

Nazi Germany’s plan for the systematic genocide of European Jews during World War II. By 1945, a total of six million Jews had been murdered in concentration and extermination camps, and in field executions by SS murder squads.

**Wannsee Conference**

A meeting where Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Reich Main Security Office, presented a plan for the Jewish population of Europe to be deported to German-occupied areas in Eastern Europe to work on construction projects and then be killed.
ToK Time
An assassination takes place in 1950. There are three accounts of it: 1) an account written by the assassin; 2) an account written by an observer at the time who saw the shooting; 3) an account written by someone writing in 2000. Which of the three accounts actually ‘knows’ what happened and why? What do you think? Explain your answer.

David Ben-Gurion
Ben-Gurion was a Zionist leader who played an important role in the creation of the State of Israel and became Israel’s first Prime Minister in 1948.

Yishuv
Yishuv (Hebrew ‘settlement’) is the name given to the Jewish residents in the Palestine region before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The term was first used in the 1880s, referring to the Jewish community who had lived in the region before 1882, at which time about 25,000 Jews, mostly from Russia, emigrated there. Yishuv is still used today to refer to the pre-1948 population in Israel.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
President of the USA between 1933 and 1945 for four terms. In regard to the Middle East, Roosevelt was seemingly inconsistent. On the one hand he wanted to end the mandate system and was totally against the idea of colonialism. He therefore supported the withdrawal of Britain from the Palestine Mandate and encouraged the establishment of a Jewish state. On the other hand Roosevelt was a little ambivalent in his statements, appearing to support both Arab and Jewish claims to the Palestine Mandate.

Another effect of the Holocaust was an awakening of pro-Zionist support in the USA, which was going to have important consequences both for the USA and Britain. As more and more information came to light about Nazi war crimes in Europe, a shift of public opinion occurred both in Israel and the USA. Chaim Weizmann, President of the World Zionist Organization (later first President of the State of Israel), had adopted a ‘gradualist’ approach to the mandate. He believed in a slower transition of power, which contrasted greatly with the more aggressive approach taken by David Ben-Gurion, leader of the Jewish Agency, who also represented the Yishuv.

Back in May 1942, the American Zionists decided to hold a conference at the Biltmore Hotel in New York. The aim was to unite, in one group, all of the pro-Zionist groups in the USA in order to create a strong political lobby and to raise money to support Palestinian Jews and European refugees. The resolutions passed at the Conference wanted to open the Palestine Mandate to Jewish immigration, which would be overseen by the Jewish Agency and, following Weizmann’s proposals, also called for the creation of a Jewish commonwealth there. A key point in the resolutions was: ‘The policy of the White Paper is cruel and indefensible in its denial of sanctuary to Jews fleeing from Nazi persecution.’

The Biltmore Program was successful in uniting American Jews and, as details of Nazi atrocities became more widespread in early 1943, membership of Zionist organizations increased dramatically. Three pro-Zionist groups were particularly influential in this lobby: The American Palestine Committee, the Christian Council on Palestine and the Zionist Emergency Council. In February 1944, the American Palestine Committee managed to get a resolution introduced into the US Senate calling for the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. Although the resolution was defeated, it was to intensify the debate in the USA about British government policy in Palestine.

Franklin Roosevelt promised in October 1944 to help create ‘the establishment of Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth’. By November 1944 both the Democratic and Republican political platforms made reference to a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. The proposals made by the Biltmore Program seemed to have been widely accepted. In August 1945 after Roosevelt’s death in April, and the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps, the new President Harry Truman wrote to the British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, concerning the lifting of quotas on Jewish immigration and requested the immediate admission of 100,000 Jewish refugees into the mandate. Some members of the US State Department thought that Truman’s pro-Zionist sentiments might offend the Arab states. Truman replied: ‘I am sorry gentlemen, but I have to answer for hundreds of thousands of those who are anxious for the success of Zionism; but I do not have hundreds of thousands of Arabs among my constituents.’ American domestic politics would ultimately play an important role in the events leading to the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Somewhat ironically, the Biltmore Program had a negative consequence for the Zionist leadership. A split developed between Weizmann and Ben-Gurion over the direction that the World Zionist Agency Organization and the Jewish Agency should take, which eventually escalated into a direct power struggle between the two leaders. Weizmann wanted to negotiate with London and tried to reintroduce the Peel Commission’s partition plan, whereas Ben-Gurion wanted direct action in the Mandate supported by US-based Zionist groups.

Between 1939 and 1945, the Arabs in Palestine were in some disarray. The Mufti had fled from Palestine during the Arab Revolt and was officially banned from entering Palestine. The British attempted to get his support with the 1939 White Paper, as they were scared of a pro-German alliance of Arabs. The Mufti rejected the White Paper and, instead,
travelled to Iraq where he participated in a revolt which brought a pro-Axis government to power. He then headed to Axis Europe where he helped the Vichy French and the Germans to recruit soldiers. He broadcast from Germany to the Middle East seeking to build opposition to the British.

Section II:
The last years of the British mandate; UNSCOP partition plan and the outbreak of civil war

By the end of 1945, the British government found itself in an impossible position. It was increasingly aware of Soviet interests in the Middle East, particularly in Turkey and Iran, and wanted to remain friendly with the Arab states. This would be difficult if Britain were to agree to the establishment of a Jewish state in the mandate. There were still large numbers of refugees following World War II, many of whom wanted to relocate to the Palestine Mandate. The League of Nations mandate in the Palestine Mandate had not worked, as what the Zionists wanted was exactly the opposite of what the Arabs wanted. The aims and objectives of the two sides were simply irreconcilable. The main concern of the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, was British interests in the Middle East. Personally, he believed that the Jewish refugee problem was not going to be solved by the partition of the Palestine Mandate and supported the idea of a Palestinian state under some sort of United Nations trusteeship, with Britain retaining a degree of administrative control. Bevin also proposed that a joint Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry be set up to investigate the matter further.

Neither the Arabs nor the Zionists supported Bevin’s announcement. The Arab leaders disagreed about which actions to take, but insisted that no Jewish state be created in the the Palestine Mandate. The leaders had already met in Alexandria in October 1944 to discuss how best to unify the policies of the Arab states. They decided to create a League of Arab States, which eventually came into existence in March 1945. They also issued a statement on the Palestine Mandate:

SOURCE A

The Committee is of the opinion that Palestine constitutes an important part of the Arab World and that the rights of the Arabs in Palestine cannot be touched without prejudice to peace and stability in the Arab World…

The Committee also declares that it is second to none in regretting the woes which have been inflicted upon the Jews of Europe by European dictatorial states. But the question of these Jews should not be confused with Zionism, for there can be no greater injustice and aggression than solving the problem of the Jews of Europe by another injustice, i.e., by inflicting injustice on the Arabs of Palestine of various religions and denominations.

From the Alexandria Protocol, 8 October 1944

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

QUESTION

What are your reactions to the last sentence of Source A starting ‘But…..’?

The Arab League made the support of the Palestinian claims an essential part of their programme, but did little else. The Zionists, on the other hand, decided to take direct action. David Ben-Gurion believed that the only way to end the mandate was through armed resistance. To this end he and others bought weapons to arm the
There were three paramilitary groups at this time. The Haganah was a full-scale underground army with more than 12,000 members. The Haganah was initially formed to protect Jewish farms and Kibbutz residents from Arab attack in 1920. It later became an underground paramilitary force that was to form the basis for the creation of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). After 1929, the Haganah reformed itself into a much more coordinated body, but its policies were seen by some Zionists as being too cautious. There were two more radical groups: the Irgun and the Lohamei Herut Israel (Fighters for the Freedom of Israel; LEHI). The Irgun Tsvai Leumi (Israeli National Military Organization), simply known as Irgun, had set itself up in 1931, but was still relatively small, with about 500 members in 1944. It believed in using terrorist tactics to achieve its aims and declared war against the mandate, committing itself to the expulsion of Britain from the area. The vast majority of Zionists, including David Ben-Gurion, the religious leadership, and most other notable figures, condemned these tactics and worked to stop them, even reporting suspects to the British. The Stern Gang, later to become the LEHI, had been created in 1940 by members of the Irgun, who believed that the Irgun’s policies were not effective enough to remove the mandate. Condemned as a terrorist group by the British, it assassinated the British Minister to the Middle East, Lord Moyne, in November 1944. The killing of Moyne, a personal friend of Winston Churchill, was to backfire on the LEHI and the Irgun, as the murder spurred the Haganah to try and crush the two groups until the middle of 1945. During this time, the Haganah began to take action against members of both LEHI and Irgun, rounding up their leaders and turning them over to the British authorities.

The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry

While the Jewish underground groups continued their revolt against the British, strongly inspired by opposition to restrictions on Jewish immigration, Holocaust survivors remained confined to crowded Displaced Persons camps. A response to the issue of displaced persons, the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, finally met in Washington on 13 November 1945. It was made up of six Britons and six Americans. The committee travelled to Europe and the Middle East to carry out interviews with people who had been displaced or imprisoned during World War II. It issued its report in May 1946, calling for the British Government to issue immigration certificates to permit 100,000 Jewish refugees to enter the Palestine Mandate in 1946. The committee rejected the creation of either an Arab or a Jewish state, but affirmed the continuation of the ‘Jewish national home’ in Palestine. The US Government and the Zionist leadership wanted to increase immigration immediately and evaluate the remaining proposals separately. The Arabs in Palestine rejected Jewish immigration and declared a general strike. The British response was to accept the findings but, rather than implement them, to create another Anglo-American group: the Morrison–Grady Committee. This group proposed, in July 1946, a British colonial structure with self-ruling Arab, Jewish and British provinces with most power held by a British High Commissioner who would also control immigration. This disappointed both Arabs and Zionists and, after a further series of meetings that resolved none of these issues, President Truman rejected the Committee’s proposals in August.

**SOURCE B**

The British devised a committee that would attempt to solve the immigration/refugee impasse: the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry (AAC). Six British and six American delegates formed the twelve man committee, which would interview Jewish refugees in America and Europe. What they decided (May 1946) was the...
following: 100,000 immigration certificates to be issued; rejection of partition of Palestine; relaxed future immigration; removal of restriction on Jewish land purchases; and the illegalization of discriminatory Zionist labor laws. Great Britain would continue the role of administrator, thus continuing the British Mandate.

From Gregory Harms, *The Palestine–Israel Conflict*, 2005

**SOURCE C**

But as for the future of Palestine, the report remained intentionally vague. ‘Any attempt to establish either an independent Palestinian state or independent Palestinian states would result in civil strife such as might threaten the peace of the world.’ Consequently, Palestine should remain under the British Mandate ‘pending the execution of a Trusteeship agreement under the United Nations’. The committee seemed to envisage a binational state in which neither Arab nor Jew could dominate the other, but beyond support for admission of 100,000, it made no recommendations for future immigration, thus leaving that matter in British hands. No one was pleased, especially Bevin, who had conceived the committee as a means to draw the Americans into the problem and to compel them to share responsibility for any future actions regarding Palestine.

From Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 2007

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**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**QUESTION**

Compare and contrast the views expressed in Sources B and C about the report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry of 1946. Here are three student answers. Which is best and why?

**Student Answer A – Abelia**

Source B explains the formation of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry and its role in solving the immigration/refugee issue of the Jewish and Palestinian people. The source reveals how the decisions made by the committee were supportive of Jewish people. For instance, the committee agreed to relax future immigration, remove restriction on Jewish land purchases and make illegal the discriminatory Zionist labour laws. Also the source expresses the view that the committee made some effective decisions to solve the issue of Palestinian and Israeli conflict. According to the source, the Arab-Israeli immigration conflict would continue to be administered by Great Britain.

Unlike Source B, Source C expresses the view that the newly set up Anglo-American Committee did not provide any substantial report that suggests a solution to the conflict. According to the source, the committee failed to make recommendations for future immigration and the ‘binational state of Palestinian and Israeli land’. Also, the source expresses the view that Britain wanted to shift over their responsibility for the Palestinian issue by working with the Americans.

In conclusion, the views expressed by Source B contrast with the views expressed by Source C. While Source B reveals the idea that the AAC provided recommendations to solve the issue of Arab-Israeli conflict, Source C disapproves of this. Also, Source B specifically states that the committee decided to maintain the ‘relaxed future immigration,’ but Source C says that ‘no recommendations for future immigration’ were provided by the committee.

Moreover, Source B contrasts with Source C as it suggests that the committee agreed to ‘reject the partition of Palestine’ whereas Source C expresses the idea that the committee wanted to create ‘a binational state controlled by British-American force’.

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◆ Examiner’s hint

Look at the different approaches used by the three students.
Student Answer B – Daisy

The two sources concerning the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry of 1946 express separate views of the committee’s decision, but base these views on similar grounds and reasoning. One of the main ideas that the two sources have in common is the agreement that the British mandate will be maintained. Source B expresses this by recognizing the decisions made, and then stating that ‘Great Britain would continue the role of administrator, thus continuing the British Mandate’. Similarly, Source C states that ‘Palestine should remain under the British Mandate’. Source C also states that the British wanted to share responsibility with the Americans, and that this was the reason for the AAC.

However, the two sources express different interpretations of the decisions made by the AAC. Both sources state that the immigration of 100,000 was to be supported and certificates were issued, but the mention of future immigration in the two sources differs. Source B states that the AAC agreed on ‘relaxed future immigration’. However, this view is contrasted with Source C as it states that ‘no recommendations [were made] for future immigration’.

Sources B and C also have different statements on the other decisions made by the AAC. For example, the decision made about the removal of restriction on Jewish land purchases is mentioned in Source B, but not at all in Source C. In conclusion, Source B basically states the terms of the agreement of the AAC, whereas Source C focuses on immigration and the independence of Palestine, and discusses them more in depth.

Student Answer C – Sean

Both Sources B and C discuss the aim of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry of 1946 and the role it had in Palestine in order to keep the conflict at peace. Source B claims that the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, or the ACC, had a big role in the peacemaking of Palestine to solve the immigration impasse. Both Americans and British men formed the committee and would work against the immigration, rejection of Palestine and the immigration certificates needed to be issued. Source B, written in London, is not biased towards Britain and therefore includes the Americans in the ACC and their plan to support Palestine.

Source C, however, complains about the involvement of Britain in Palestine and argues that America does not take a major part in the peacemaking in Palestine. The source, however, explains, like Source B, how all the steps taken by Britain were against the immigration. Source C, written by an American in Boston, therefore shows the contradictions between the British and the Americans as to who had the ability to establish order and who had the responsibility for any actions. Both sources therefore agree on the actions taken by the ACC but disagree on the the countries’ real involvement in the actions.

Examiner’s comments

Abelia’s is not a good approach to take. The first two paragraphs have no direct linkage between the two sources. The last paragraph is much better, but comes too late.

Daisy’s answer is much better and is an excellent model for this type of question. It links Sources B and C together and is stylistically very elegant. A point is taken from Source B and is then either supported or refuted by Source C. The examiner can therefore clearly see the use of ‘compare and contrast’ in this approach. It is much stronger than the answers given by Pat and Sean.

In Sean’s answer there is considerable reference here to material that is in the sources, but Sean has not used the information very well. The first paragraph quickly makes a comparison, but then loses focus. The last sentence is a value judgement. The second paragraph makes the same sort of mistake. There is not enough direct linkage between the two sources.
In the meantime, the situation in the mandate had become more critical. The Haganah, the Palmach commanders, LEHI and Irgun unified their command and began to collaborate from October 1945. A full-scale campaign was carried out against British troops and institutions. One of the most notable incidents occurred in July 1946 with the blowing up of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem (the site of the British military command and the British Criminal Investigation Division) by the Irgun, killing 91 people and injuring 45. The Irgun issued warnings to evacuate the building before the bombs exploded, but the warnings were either ignored or did not reach British officials in time. During the rest of 1946, attacks were made on bridges, railway lines, banks, power stations and military camps.

The British position in the mandate was becoming impossible for the government. There were more than 100,000 British troops stationed there and public opinion at home was strongly against the continued existence of British forces in the Palestine Mandate. By October 1947, 127 British soldiers had been killed and 133 others wounded. On 4 October 1946, President Truman called for the partition of the Palestine Mandate and, coming under increasing political and economic pressure both at home and abroad, Bevin hosted a conference in London in February 1947. The United Nations (UN), formed between April and June 1945, had taken over from the League of Nations as the administrator of mandated territories, and Bevin was keen to hand the issue over to the new organization. Delegations from both the Zionists and Arabs met with the British government and it was soon clear that the two sides had two completely opposite proposals. Ben-Gurion wanted partition, which Bevin was against, while the Arabs wanted to prevent any further Jewish immigration and wanted the entire area to become an Arab state. Initially Bevin offered to place the territories under a trusteeship for five years with the intention of creating an Arab state with a Jewish minority and limiting Jewish immigration. This the Zionists rejected out of hand and Ben-Gurion suggested a return to the pre-1939 status quo, a proposal that the Arab states immediately turned down. Unable to come to any compromise with the Zionists and the Arabs, Bevin decided to hand the whole matter over to the UN to resolve, and on 18 February made a speech to the House of Commons in which he explained the decision of the British government.

**SOURCE D**

For the Jews, the essential point of principle is the creation of a sovereign Jewish State. For the Arabs, the essential point of principle is to resist to the last the establishment of Jewish sovereignty in any part of Palestine... His Majesty’s Government have of themselves no power, under the terms of the Mandate, to award the country either to the Arabs or to the Jews, or even to partition it between them...

It is in these circumstances that we have decided that we are unable to accept the scheme put forward either by the Arabs or by the Jews, or to impose ourselves a solution of our own. We have, therefore, reached the conclusion that the only course now open to us is to submit the problem to the judgment of the United Nations...

We shall then ask the United Nations to consider our report, and to recommend a settlement of the problem. We do not intend ourselves to recommend any particular solution.

From Bevin’s speech, 18 February 1947

**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**QUESTION**

Bevin’s statement makes it clear that Britain decided to give up the mandate over Palestine. The reasons should be clear to you why this was the case in the Middle East, but find out for yourself, by research, what other global factors influenced the British decision to leave.
The UNSCOP partition plan

The UN decided to set up a UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to investigate the problem. Representatives of 11 countries stayed in the Palestine Mandate during June and July 1947. During their stay, two British soldiers were kidnapped by the Irgun and held as hostages against three Irgun members. When the British executed the Irgun prisoners, the Irgun hanged the British soldiers and booby-trapped their bodies, an act strongly condemned by the Haganah and Zionist leadership. Also during this time, British treatment of the passengers of a ship called the Exodus (originally the President Garfield) horrified the world. The ship, carrying 4550 refugees from Europe, attempted to sail to the Palestine Mandate. It was seized by the Royal Navy and taken to Haifa in the Palestine Mandate. The British then returned the ship to Marseilles, from where the refugees were shipped back to Germany and detained in a displaced persons camp amid worldwide condemnation.

The UNSCOP plan was submitted to the General Assembly in New York in August 1947 and was unanimous in calling for the ending of the British mandate. There was, however, disagreement about the nature of the state that should replace the British mandate. The majority of the committee wanted partition into a Jewish and an Arab state, with Jerusalem becoming an international city. Other members wanted an independent federal state under UN administration. The report made a number of recommendations:

**Source E**

**PART I. Plan of partition with economic union justification**

1. The basic premise underlying the partition proposal is that the claims to Palestine of the Arabs and Jews, both possessing validity, are irreconcilable, and that among all of the solutions advanced, partition will provide the most realistic and practicable settlement, and is the most likely to afford a workable basis for meeting in part the claims and national aspirations of both parties.

2. It is a fact that both of these peoples have their historic roots in Palestine, and that both make vital contributions to the economic and cultural life of the country. The partition solution takes these considerations fully into account.

3. The basic conflict in Palestine is a clash of two intense nationalisms. Regardless of the historical origins of the conflict, the rights and wrongs of the promises and counter-promises, and the international intervention incident to the Mandate, there are now in Palestine some 650,000 Jews and some 1,200,000 Arabs who are dissimilar in their ways of living and, for the time being, separated by political interests which render difficult full and effective political co-operation among them, whether voluntary or induced by constitutional arrangements.

4. Only by means of partition can these conflicting national aspirations find substantial expression and qualify both peoples to take their places as independent nations in the international community and in the United Nations.

From UN Special Committee on Palestine, Recommendations to the General Assembly, A/364, 3 September 1947

**Student Study Section**

**Question**

Compare the UN report’s proposal to earlier proposals such as the Peel Commission’s report, the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry’s report, and the Morrison–Grady plan. How is it similar? How is it different? How do you think Zionists, Arabs, and American and British citizens at the time would have responded to its justification for partition?
An Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question was set up by the General Assembly to hear reactions from both Arabs and Jews to UNSCOP’s proposals. The Arab state rejected the proposals in their entirety. The Arabs believed:

SOURCE F

… that Palestine was an integral part of the Arab world and that from the beginning its indigenous inhabitants have opposed the creation in their country of a Jewish national home. They also insisted that the United Nations, a body created and controlled by the United States and Europe, had no right to grant the Zionists any portion of their territory. In what was to become a familiar Arab charge they insisted that the Western world was seeking to salve its conscience for the atrocities of war and was paying its own debt to the Jewish people with someone else’s land.

From Mark Tessler, A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1994

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

QUESTION

Take each of the three sentences in the above quotation from Tessler. Do you agree with the Arab perspective? What evidence is there to support and counter these claims?

The Zionists generally supported UNSCOP’s recommendations, but there was concern that, even with the support of the USA, the resolution would not receive the two-thirds majority in the General Assembly needed to pass. After a period of diplomacy and diplomatic pressure, on 29 November 1947 with a vote of 33 for, 13 against and 10 abstaining, UN Resolution 181 was passed. The USSR and most of its allies in Eastern
Europe voted for the resolution. The reasons for the vote were strategic. The Soviets aimed to eliminate British influence in the area, drive a wedge between the UK and the US, and establish the USSR as a force in the Middle East. Twelve days later Ernest Bevin announced that Britain would end its mandate on 15 May 1948.

Section III:
British withdrawal; establishment of Israel; Arab response and the 1948/49 war

The result sparked wild scenes of celebration in New York and Tel Aviv, but was greeted with anger by the Arabs. They rejected the creation of any Jewish state and threatened war if the UN plan was implemented. Critics point out that the UN allocated almost 57 per cent of the area for a Jewish state when Jews comprised about a third of the population (see Map 10). Others note that approximately 60 per cent of that area was the harsh Negev Desert, that state would have a Jewish majority, and that almost 80 per cent of the Palestine Mandate had already become the Arab state of Transjordan.
Look carefully at the map. Why do you think that the UN partitioned the mandate in this way?

The immediate result was the calling of a general strike by the Arabs for 2–4 December 1947, which gradually escalated into violence. Between the UN vote in November 1947 and the day that Israel was created (14 May 1948), a bloody civil war erupted between Arabs and Jews living in the mandate. The UN decided against installing any temporary peacekeeping force in Palestine and the British forces turned a blind eye to the fighting between the two groups.

At first the Arab forces were successful in attacking many Jewish convoys and settlements, thereby cutting off the delivery of supplies to larger Jewish cities. In March 1948 the Haganah changed tactics and adopted a new strategy based on their Plan Dalet (or Plan D), which had two objectives. The first was to defend Jewish communities from attack and control the territory designated to become the Jewish state by the proposed partition plan. The second was to protect existing Jewish communities outside these borders. This second objective accepted the implication that Arab villages and neighbourhoods which posed a threat to nearby Jewish villages and neighbourhoods would be destroyed or forcibly evacuated. This strategy was developed in the context of Arab calls for the complete annihilation of the Jewish population and fears that the Jewish community would soon face another attempted genocide.

SOURCE A

(d) Operational Objectives

1. Self-defense against invasion by regular or semi-regular forces. This will be achieved by the following:
   - A fixed defensive system to preserve our settlements, vital economic projects, and property, which will enable us to provide governmental services within the borders of the state (based on defending the regions of the state on the one hand, and on blocking the main access routes from enemy territory to the territory of the state on the other).
   - Launching pre-planned counter-attacks on enemy bases and supply lines in the heart of his territory, whether within the borders of the country [Palestine] or in neighboring countries.

2. Ensuring freedom of military and economic activity within the borders of the [Hebrew] state and in Jewish settlements outside its borders by occupying and controlling important high-ground positions on a number of transportation arteries.

3. Preventing the enemy from using frontline positions within his territory which can easily be used for launching attacks. This will be effected by occupying and controlling them.

4. Applying economic pressure on the enemy by besieging some of his cities in order to force him to abandon some of his activities in certain areas of the country.

5. Restricting the capability of the enemy by carrying out limited operations: occupation and control of certain of his bases in rural and urban areas within the borders of the state.

6. Controlling government services and property within the borders of the state and ensuring the supply of essential public services in an effective manner.

From Plan Dalet, 10 March 1948

Palestinian Arabs have heavily criticized the plan claiming it was a deliberate plan to expel all Arabs from Palestine. Others have argued expulsion was not part of the plan, which sought to protect the Jewish community from attack. Read through the extract above and make a list of which sentences in it could justify the contradictory interpretations.
**SOURCE B**

*The representative of the Jewish Agency told us yesterday that they were not attackers, not aggressors; that the Arabs had begun the fight … We did not deny this fact. We told the whole world that … we were going to fight.*

From Jamal Husseini, the spokesman for the Arab High Committee in United Nations Security Council Official Records, S/Agenda/58, 16 April 1948, p. 19

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**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**QUESTION**

Often, each side in a conflict blames the other for starting the violence. In this case, the Palestinian Arab leadership claimed responsibility. Brainstorm and record reasons they might have claimed responsibility.

The civil war continued and some on both sides carried out a series of car bombings and raids on Arab and Jewish settlements. At an oil refinery in Haifa, employing both Arabs and Jews, a bomb killed six Arab workers at its gates. In retaliation, Arabs killed 41 Jews and wounded 48 more before the fighting was brought under control. On 9 April 1948 a mixed Irgun and LEHI force attacked the village of Deir Yassin, killing at least 107 men, women, and children. Other villagers fled or were taken prisoner and released in nearby Jerusalem. Many Palestinians claim that this was a deliberate massacre of an unresisting population. There is, however, significant evidence to support the conclusion that the force was fired on from the village, and that the high number of civilian casualties was due to the uncertain nature of fighting between militias in a built-up area. The Arabs retaliated by attacking a Jewish medical convoy on 13 April, killing 79 Jewish doctors and nurses. The battle at Deir Yassin had a major impact on the Arab community, creating panic. As news of the fighting spread, a wave of Arab refugees fled Palestinian villages and towns, fearing for their safety.

By the time the mandate ended in May, it is estimated that more than 300,000 Palestinian Arabs had fled to other areas in Palestine or to other Arab states. This issue was to become a legacy of the 1948 war and was to prove impossible to resolve. On 14 May 1948, David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the existence of the independent State of Israel according to the UNSCOP partition plan. The new state was immediately recognized by both the Soviet Union and the USA. The next day the armies of Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon and Iraq attacked the embryonic Israeli state. Saudi Arabia supported the other Arab states, but only in a limited way.

**SOURCE C**

*WE APPEAL – in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months – to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.*

*WE EXTEND our hand to all neighbouring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighbourliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.*

From the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel 1948

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**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**QUESTION**

This extract from the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel on 14 May 1948 promises equality for Arab inhabitants of the state and expresses a hope for peace with the neighbouring Arab states. Why do you think this was part of the Jewish state’s Declaration of Independence? How do you think Arabs within its borders and in Arab states would have responded if they read the text?
The 1948 Arab-Israeli War

The 1948 war can be divided into two clear stages. They date from 15 May to 11 June, at which point a temporary truce was declared, and from 6 July to 19 July. The Arab armies were superior in air power and heavy weapons, but their land forces were not trained for sustained campaigns. The Egyptian Army was really only an armed police force, and the only effective army was that of Transjordan whose King, Abdullah, was put in command of the entire Arab armies. The Arab states were also not united in their policies and each country had its own particular objectives. Thus the creation of a separate Palestinian state was not really the motivation behind the Arab states going to war. King Abdullah was keen to annex the western portion of the former mandate to his kingdom, which once was the eastern portion, while both Syria and Egypt hoped to acquire some land for themselves. Abdullah had already accepted the UN partition plan and ordered his troops not to undertake any military action in the land that had been given to Israel. There was, therefore, no coordinated military leadership among the Arab states.

The early campaigns saw Arab forces penetrate Israeli positions and the Arabs had managed to secure some territory around Jerusalem. The Israeli forces, though outnumbered three to one, were better trained and superior in tactics. The core of the IDF was made up of members of the Haganah and Irgun who had become battle-hardened fighting the British. Count Folke Bernadotte, a Swedish UN negotiator, arranged for a month-long truce on 11 June.

When Syria and Egypt restarted the war on 6 July it was clear that the Israeli forces were in a much stronger military position than they had been before and they were forcing Arab troops to retreat, particularly around Galilee. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians became refugees. By the time that the second truce was declared on 18 July, the Israelis had pushed the invading forces away from Jewish population centres. Count Bernadotte worked tirelessly to find a diplomatic solution to end the war. By September he had worked out a proposed agreement: Jerusalem was to be an international city; Israel was to retain Galilee; Palestinian refugees were to be allowed to return to the land from which they had fled; and Israel would lose control of the Negev and the important port of Haifa. Both sides rejected the proposal.

On 17 September 1948, Bernadotte was murdered by members of LEHI. The Israeli government condemned the assassination. In October the IDF regained control of the Negev Desert and pushed the Egyptian Army back to the Gaza Strip. Eventually an armistice was signed in January 1949, which was concluded on 24 February. Territorially, Israel controlled more than 75 per cent of the land in the 1947 UN Partition Plan. Much of the Arab state proposed in the plan had been lost to Arab armies (see Map 11). Jordan controlled the West Bank and East Jerusalem (formally annexed in 1950), and Egypt controlled the Gaza Strip.
STUDENT STUDY SECTION

QUESTION
Compare this map with the UN Partition Plan (Map 10) above. What are the differences between the two maps?

The Israeli victory occurred because their forces were well organized, and highly motivated as the Jews were fighting for their lives, with nowhere to flee if they lost. Apart from Transjordan's Arab League, the Arab forces were not well trained and were without a cohesive command structure. The ceasefire did not lead to a peace settlement and technically the two sides were still at war when the 1967 Six-Day War began. The proposal put forward by the UN Partition Plan to create Jerusalem as an international city was formalized on 9 December 1949. Jordan rejected the plan outright, annexed East Jerusalem and the Old City the following year, destroyed synagogues, and denied Jews access to any of the holy sites as required by the plan. Israel also rejected this resolution and declared that the Israeli part of West Jerusalem would become the capital of the new State of Israel.

SOURCE D

(1) To restate, therefore, its intention that Jerusalem should be placed under a permanent international regime, which should envisage appropriate guarantees for the protection of the Holy Places, both within and outside Jerusalem, and to confirm specifically the following provisions of General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) 3/ (1) the City of Jerusalem shall be established as a corpus separatum under a special international regime and shall be administered by the United Nations; (2) the Trusteeship Council shall be designated to discharge the responsibilities of the Administering Authority... ; and (3) the City of Jerusalem shall include the present municipality of Jerusalem plus the surrounding villages and towns...

From United Nations General Assembly Resolution 303

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

QUESTION
What precisely is meant by ‘the Holy Places, both within and outside Jerusalem’? What does the Latin term corpus separatum mean? Who controlled and who did and did not have access to those ‘Holy Places’ after the 1949 war?

Section IV:
Demographic shifts: the Palestinian Diaspora 1947 onwards; Jewish immigration and the economic development of the Israeli state

The refugee question

One of the most important consequences of the 1948 war was the two groups of refugees that resulted from the war. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs became refugees, and comparable numbers of Jews were expelled from Arab lands following the war. Most Jews were absorbed into Israel. The dispersion or Diaspora of the Palestinian Arabs is still known today by Palestinians as al-Nakba, or ‘The Catastrophe’. There is considerable disagreement as to how many Palestinian Arabs were displaced between 1948 and 1949. Israelis tend to underestimate, while Arabs tend to overestimate the number of refugees. There is no reliable or agreed-upon statistic and estimates range between 400,000 and
800,000. The 1949 Israeli census recorded 160,000 Arab Palestinians remaining inside the expanded Israeli state. They became citizens of Israel. Some refugees settled in the Egyptian-controlled Gaza Strip, others went to the Jordanian-controlled West Bank, and many settled in refugee camps in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

**SOURCE A**

![Palestinian Refugee Camp, 1949]

**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**QUESTION**

What message is conveyed in Source A?
Here are two student sample answers. Can you do better?

**Student Answer A – Ken**

The message conveyed in Source A is that the Palestinians in the refugee camps are suffering. The women are queuing up, probably for food, and are being guarded by a police officer or other official. This gives the viewer the impression that the Palestinians don’t have enough to eat since they lost their homes.

**Student Answer B – Alan**

The photograph shows a line of Palestinian women waiting for food distribution. They are being watched by an armed guard and the compound is surrounded by barbed wire. There appear to only be women in the line, who seem to have been waiting for some time, suggesting that there is a shortage of food. Palestinians did not have, by that time, a land that belonged to them and they are therefore in camps. This situation, however, takes some of their identity away from them as they do not know to which country they belong and where their homes are.

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*Examiner’s hint*

You should spend no more than about five minutes on this question. There are two easy points. Can you find them?
It would be helpful to establish why the Arab refugees left their homes, and much scholarship has looked into this issue with diverse findings. It remains the subject of fundamental disagreement. What has been determined by extensive research is that the reasons varied greatly depending on the location and those interviewed. If they decided to leave by themselves, with no direct influence from any other factor, then Israel could legally argue that they had no right of return and must stay in their chosen state. If, on the other hand, they were illegally expelled by Israeli forces, as the Palestinian Arabs claimed, then Israel had a duty of care to allow them to return to their homes. Naturally, an influx of Palestinian refugees back into Israel would upset the political and economic stability of the new state. The Israelis maintain that the Arab armies had encouraged the Palestinian Arabs to leave temporarily to allow freedom of military action. Those refugees who did so would therefore have no right of return, as they left their homes voluntarily.

The Arabs argue that Israel systematically forced the refugees out through a methodical programme of terror and violence. They point to the deadly Deir Yassin episode as proof of their claim. However, Arab states, except for Jordan, have refused citizenship and social integration to their resident Palestinians. The plight of these refugees and their descendants has yet to be resolved. The refugees’ desires and Israel’s determination to resist them are still at the heart of the continuing Middle East conflict.

One immediate effect of the refugee problem in the 1940s was the creation of an international agency to try to deal with the problem. In December 1948, the UN established the Palestine Conciliation Commission, which was set up to reach agreement on the question of the refugees. Finally, in December 1949, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) was created as a temporary measure to aid the refugees. Still in existence today, UNRWA estimates that there are over 4.6 million descendants of those displaced Palestinian refugees from 1949. Some live in the West Bank and Gaza, some live in neighbouring Arab countries, and others are citizens of countries around the world. UNWRA defines Palestinian refugees expansively. No other group has had refugee status continually extended to include subsequent generations.
The immediate consequences of the 1948 war for Israel

In 1949 Israel held its first election. A proportional system of representation was used, which meant that each of the approximately 20 parties would receive the same proportion of seats in the Knesset as their share of the total votes cast. David Ben-Gurion of the Mapai Party received the largest number of seats in the Knesset and formed a coalition government with some smaller parties, becoming Israel’s first Prime Minister. Chaim Weizmann was given the ceremonial position of President. Israeli Arab citizens were entitled to vote; Arabs have served in office since the first Knesset. The government dissolved the Irgun and the Palmach with the intention of creating a strong centrally controlled military and introduced compulsory conscription for most Jewish young people regardless of gender. Most Middle Eastern and North African Jews were expelled from their countries or fled violence, and in a few years Israel absorbed around 750,000 refugees from Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Libya, Iraq, Yemen, and Aden. Holocaust survivors from internment camps in Cyprus and Displaced Persons camps in Europe arrived in Israel. The new Jewish state made it clear that a place existed in Israel for all those in the Jewish Diaspora to return. In July 1950, the Knesset passed the following measure:
**Source C**

**Right of aliya**
1. Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an oleh.

**Oleh’s visa**
2. (a) Aliyah shall be by oleh’s visa.
(b) An oleh’s visa shall be granted to every Jew who has expressed his desire to settle in Israel, unless the Minister of Immigration is satisfied that the applicant
   (1) is engaged in an activity directed against the Jewish people; or
   (2) is likely to endanger public health or the security of the State.

From *The Law of Return, 5 July 1950*

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**Student Study Section**

**Question**

Research the origin of Jewish immigrants to Israel between 1949 and 1952. Where did Holocaust survivors come from, and why did Jews leave Arab lands? What effect do you think the passing of the law of return in Source C would have had on Jews living outside Israel, Jews living within Israel, and Palestinians? On 14 July 1952, the First Nationality Law went into effect in Israel. Use the Internet or your local library to find out what the consequences were for Jews and Palestinians.

The Law of Return formalized Israel’s immigration policy. The law reacted to the way nearly all the nations of the world refused entry to most Jews fleeing the Nazis between 1933 and 1945, and to the way Great Britain allowed only a small number of Jews and Holocaust survivors into Palestine between 1939 and 1948. Under this law all Jews would have a haven. Between 1949 and 1952 Israel’s population doubled to about 1.4 million. Pogroms and anti-Jewish laws in Middle Eastern and North African countries forced Jews to leave these countries, often abandoning their goods and property. Holocaust survivors left the internment and Displaced Persons camps of Europe. Both groups were brought to Israel by Israeli government efforts. This population was made up of two large groups, European Jews (Ashkenazim) and Middle Eastern/Asian Jews (Sephardim). The former tended to have family and relatives in Israel and found it relatively easy to integrate into society. The latter group often lacked skills to find jobs. Many of them ended up in camps and settlements. A two-class society began to emerge, as many European Jews considered themselves superior. The new immigrants initially supported Ben-Gurion’s Mapai Party, but as time passed and Ben-Gurion’s negative attitude towards the Sephardim became apparent, they began to switch their allegiance to the opposition party, Likud, led by Menachem Begin.

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**Source D**

*A photograph of a camp for Jewish immigrants, 1952.*
The new State of Israel had to try to resolve some major problems. It had an increasing population, a shortage of water and a shortfall in food supplies. Additionally, Israel possessed few natural resources, including oil or coal. Before 1948, Israel had imported oil from the Arab states that now refused to trade with her. The Arab states also closed sea access to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. It was therefore essential for Israel to try to get foreign aid.

After 1948 the two major sources of funding for Israel were the American Export-Import Bank and the United Jewish Appeal – both of which were US based. Yet as Israel emerged victorious from the war, less and less money was coming into Israel from these sources. In 1950 Israeli politician Golda Meir travelled to the USA to appeal for a renegotiation of Israel’s debts. Somewhat ironically, a new source of income was found that proved to be difficult for some Israelis to accept. In 1951, the German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, announced that Germany would pay compensation to Israel for Germany’s treatment of Jews under the Nazi regime. The German government agreed on the manner of reparations at almost exactly the time that Israel was in a state of financial collapse. The influx of materials and money from Germany, as well as compensation payments made to individuals, was to provide the basis for the agricultural and industrial recovery of Israel. The Reparations Treaty between Germany and Israel was finally signed in Luxembourg in September 1952.

The consequences of the 1948 war for the Arab states

For the Arab states, defeat in the 1948 war and the problem of the Palestinian refugees were a catastrophe and they had immediate effects in every state. The leaders were universally blamed for the Arab humiliation, and nationalist and military groups saw the chance to seize the initiative. In Syria, there were three military coups in 1949 alone. In Jordan the Palestinian Arabs blamed King Abdullah for not taking a stronger stand against Israel and he was heavily criticized for signing a non-aggression agreement with Israel in 1950. In July 1951, a Palestinian assassinated Abdullah as he left a mosque. He was replaced by his son Talal, who himself was overthrown in 1953 by Hussein. The Lebanese Prime Minister was assassinated in 1951 and the President was overthrown by a military coup in 1952.

Perhaps the most significant change came in Egypt. The country, under King Farouk, was suffering domestic turmoil. Nationalist groups were demanding total independence from Britain and the removal of the 70,000 British troops still stationed in Egypt, guarding the Suez Canal. Following disturbances in Cairo in early 1952, which were started by the Muslim Brotherhood, Farouk was overthrown in a bloodless coup by a group of young army officers. Two years later, after a power struggle with the first President of Egypt, General Muhammed Naguib, Gamal Abdul Nasser became the new President.

Nasser was intensely nationalistic and was determined to improve the living conditions of the Egyptian people. He rapidly reached an agreement with the British government by which British troops would withdraw from their bases close to the Suez Canal by June 1956. Nasser had little experience in international affairs, but was seen by the USA as a leader who would not provoke conflict with Israel. In fact between 1952 and 1954 relations between Egypt and Israel were relatively peaceful.
The Palestinians who fled from their homes during this conflict could have been spared this tragedy if their fellow Arabs had accepted the authority of the United Nations. And so they should have. What point is there to being part of a democratic body – the United Nations – if its decisions are accepted only if they agree with one’s own views? By rejecting the majority decision to partition Palestine, the Arab nations had placed themselves above the fundamental democratic process on which the United Nations is based. Since the creation of Israel over fifty years ago, Arab nations have repeatedly denied Israel’s right to exist. Hatred and bloodshed have been the result of such intransigence. While Jews have sought peace with their neighbours, the Arabs have waged war.

A Jewish Perspective by Dan Cohn-Sherbok, from Dan Cohn-Sherbok and Dawoud El-Alami, *The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*, 2002

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As the situation stands, the law of this state supposedly created as a moral reaction to religious and ethnic discrimination incorporates a ‘Right of Return’ that gives any Jew from any part of the globe the right to settle in Israel. Immigrants do not have to be victims of discrimination or persecution who are seeking a place of safety. At the same time the [Arab] population has been uprooted and scattered. Hundreds of thousands still live as refugees or stateless persons. The total number of Palestinians in the Diaspora is in the region of four million. They have no right of return. How can this ever be the basis of a just society? From a Palestinian perspective it seems that Israelis, non-Israeli Jews and indeed the world are oblivious to or simply do not care about what has been done to the Palestinians. How can the Jewish people, whether in the Holy Land or elsewhere, a people themselves so badly wronged within living memory, in conscience accept that the creation of the Jewish state has been achieved by the displacement and the continued agony of another people?

A Palestinian Perspective by Dawoud El-Alami, from Dan Cohn-Sherbok and Dawoud El-Alami, *The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*, 2002

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**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**QUESTIONS**

1. Read sources E and F. Compare and contrast the two viewpoints. Whom do they hold responsible for the situation of the Palestinians? Is your answer different if the conflict is framed as between Arabs and Israelis, or between Palestinians and Israelis? What about when it is considered in light of the UN Partition Plan?

2. Analyse the meaning of the following political cartoon according to both of the above perspectives.

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**SOURCE G**

Cartoon from the Seattle Post Intelligencer by David Horsey in 2002.
What is the message conveyed by Source G?

**Student Answer A – Dawn**
Source G is a political cartoon from the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* by David Horsey from the year 2002. The cartoon is titled ‘The Pawn’ and shows a chessboard. The figures which are involved in the game are labelled as Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya, Iraq and Jordan. The faces of these figures can be identified as prominent leaders of these nations, as for example Saddam Hussein or Gaddafi. Israel and Palestine are also represented in the game. Israel is represented as a rook in the game in the form of a black soldier with a machine gun. Palestine, white as all other Arab nations, is a pawn threatened by the Israeli rook. Saudi Arabia is looking at the situation and encouraging the Palestinian pawn ‘Go ahead! He took your square – take it back!’ The message conveyed is that Palestine stands no real chance against heavily armed Israel. Even if Israel seeks to occupy Palestinian territory, without the help of the Arab nations, Palestine has no realistic opportunity of reconquering the land.

**Student Answer B – Amy**
The corner of a chessboard is shown. Israel is shown as a rook, backed into a corner with few options. It is the only black piece on the board. The rook is pointing a gun at a white pawn labelled ‘Palestinians’. Powerful Arab countries and Iran could be assumed to be on the Palestinians’ side because they are all white chess pieces. The other Arab countries and Iran clearly view the Palestinians as expendable pawns. Saudi Arabia, speaking for the other states, is goading the Palestinian pawn towards attacking Israel, saying ‘Go ahead! He took your square – take it back!’ knowing that the pawn has no legal move and that the pawn will be destroyed in the process. The cartoon shows that, although Arab states and Iran claim to be on the same side as the Palestinians, they are willing, without risking themselves, to see the Palestinians destroyed for their own advantage.

**Examiner’s comments**
Dawn has too much summary of content here. Only the last three lines actually answer the question. This is one of the most common errors made by students with this sort of question. Without the last three lines, Dawn would score zero. Here she will probably get 1 mark.

Amy has provided an interesting and perceptive analysis of the cartoon. Do you agree with the last sentence or is Amy mistaken? If you do not agree with her would this analysis still be worth 2 marks? The examiner would look at the mark scheme and then see whether or not Amy had done enough to achieve 2 marks by making two clearly identifiable points. In this case it is probable that she would, as examiners are told to credit what is there, rather than penalize the student.

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**Section V:**
**The Suez Crisis of 1956: role of Britain, France, the United States, the USSR, Israel and the UNO; Arabism and Zionism; emergence of the PLO**

While Nasser was establishing his control over Egypt, a series of developments was transforming the Cold War. These events would have an important impact on the Middle East, and eventually lead to the 1956 Suez Crisis. In 1950 Britain, France and the USA agreed to limit arms shipments to Egypt and Israel in an attempt to minimize
the possibilities of further conflict in the area. At the same time, partly as a result of the ending of the Korean War in 1953 and partly as a result of the Radford Plan, the US government was changing the thinking behind its foreign policy. The aim was still to contain communist expansion as envisaged in the March 1947 Truman Doctrine, but the means by which this was to be done had shifted emphasis. The aim was to put a ‘ring around the Soviet Union’ by establishing treaties with countries bordering on the southern parts of Soviet territory and which were considered to be strategically important to the West. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had already been established in 1949 and Turkey became a member in February 1952. Following Mao’s accession to power in China in October 1949, the North Korean invasion of South Korea in June 1950 and the defeat of the French in Indochina in 1954, another pact was signed in September 1954. The South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) was signed between eight nations and aimed to limit any further communist expansion into Asia.

Hardly surprisingly, the Middle East was seen as a region where Soviet influence might need to be contained. John Foster Dulles, the US Secretary of State and a fervent anti-communist, was in favour of a ‘northern tier’ concept. In this concept, those non-Arab countries that lay on the Soviet Union’s southern borders would sign a treaty that would be supported by the West along the same lines as NATO and SEATO. It was clear that Nasser was not in favour of the establishment of US military bases in Egypt and the USA sought to find other nations with which it could ally itself. The USA had supported the coup in Iran and now signed agreements with Turkey and Pakistan. Britain was against the extension of US influence in the region, particularly with countries it saw as being part of its own sphere of influence. In 1955 a mutual security agreement called the Baghdad Pact was signed by Great Britain, Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan, aiming to consolidate Britain’s position in the Middle East. The USA did not join the pact formally, but was allowed to have observer status instead. As time passed it was obvious that the policies and actions of the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the USA would play ever-increasing roles in the region.

**SOURCE A**

> Military blocs in the Near and Middle East are needed, not by the countries of that area, but by those aggressive American circles which are trying to establish domination there. They are also needed by those British circles which, by means of these blocs, are trying to retain and restore their shaken positions, in spite of the vital interests of the peoples of the Near and Middle East who have taken the road of independent national development...

> Of course, the Soviet Union cannot remain indifferent to the situation arising in the region of the Near and Middle East, since the formation of these blocs and the establishment of foreign military bases on the territory of the countries of the Near and Middle East have a direct bearing on the security of the USSR. This attitude of the Soviet government should be all the more understandable since the USSR is situated very close to these countries – something which cannot be said of other foreign powers, for instance, of the United States, which is thousands of kilometres from this area...

From a statement by the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Security in the Near and Middle East, 16 April 1955

**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**QUESTION**

What are the origin, purpose, value and limitations of Source A?
Student Answer A – Sebastian

The origin of the source is a statement by the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs on security in the Near and Middle East on 16 April 1955. The purpose of the source is to state that the situation in the Middle East does affect the Soviet Union and that it will not tolerate American domination of the area. A value of the source is that it shows the Soviet view and policies towards the Middle East. It shows Soviet fears for its security due to American military bases in the East. A limitation of the source is that it is politically biased as the USA was the enemy of the USSR at this time during the Cold War. It will aim at presenting the United States in a bad light. It thus is not an objective account of the situation in the Middle East.

Student Answer B – Carl

The passage originates from a statement by the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Security in the Near and Middle East on 16 April 1955. Its main purpose is to account for and explain the stance of the USSR towards the situation in the Near and Middle East. It also makes plans as to aspects that are needed to limit the aggressive American and British circles. The greatest value is that it is part of an original and official statement of the policies the USSR had towards the USA and UK as well as an explanation for the policies. The biggest limitation of the source is that just because it’s official, one cannot assume that these were the actual policies taken on by the USSR. Although these were the policies and explanations that were published, the actual reasoning and aims are often not enclosed in such documents.

Examiner’s comments

Sebastian provides a very sound analysis of the source, although he should be careful in his use of the word ‘biased’. The reason for this is that weaker students use the term ‘biased’ all the time, but are unable to provide any justification as to why this is so – or they assume that any Israeli source writing about the Palestinian issue will automatically be negative towards the Palestinian cause and is therefore automatically ‘biased’. Which of these two would receive the higher mark or should they both receive the same mark? Explain your answer. Although both Sebastian and Carl have made different points they have both included a clear attempt at following the rubric of origin, purpose, value and limitations. Sebastian relies too much on the content, whereas Carl’s analysis is a little deeper. Carl would probably receive a mark more than Sebastian (4 against 3).

Nasser was furious at the signing of the Baghdad Pact and was particularly angry with Iraq’s leader, Nuri al-Said, whom Nasser saw as rejecting Arab nationalist interests and potentially upsetting the fragile peace that existed between Egypt and Israel. Nasser perceived himself as the leader of Arab nationalism, and it was clear that sooner or later his objectives would result in a clash with the Western powers, particularly as Britain and France still technically owned the Suez Canal.

In the meantime, the Palestinian Arabs had become better organized and their fedayeen guerrillas were carrying out raids on Israeli positions. Between 1950 and 1954, 186 Israelis were killed and 279 wounded. The Israeli government decided to take a hard line against the fedayeen and began to strike back in retaliation, creating a new anti-terrorist force, Unit 101. On 13 October 1953, as revenge for an attack that killed an Israeli mother and her children, Ben-Gurion ordered an attack on the Jordanian village of Qibya during which 69 people were killed, many of them women and children. This raid was condemned by the USA and the Arab world. It would also be one of the reasons behind a gradual deterioration of the relationship between Egypt and Israel. In 1954 a hard-liner, Pinhas Lavon, became the Israeli Minister of Defense. Lavon was worried that the impending departure of British troops from the Suez Canal, effectively removing the buffer between Egypt and Israel, would be a military threat to Israel. He devised a scheme whereby American and British

Nuri al-Said

Nuri served as Prime Minister of Iraq many times, and was its leader between 1954 and 1957. In 1930 he was instrumental in negotiating a treaty with Britain recognizing Iraq’s independence. After World War II, Iraq joined the Baghdad Pact, which served to alienate Nuri from many Arab nations, who saw Iraq as being too pro-Western. Eventually, in 1958, following the army revolt that overthrew the monarchy, Nuri was killed in the coup d’état.

Fedayeen

Means ‘resistance forces’ or ‘commandos’ in Arabic. The term specifically refers to Palestinian guerrilla fighters.
buildings, such as banks, would be bombed by Israeli agents. He thought that this would force the British to keep their troops in the region to protect British interests, thus removing any potential Egyptian threat. The plan failed and Lavon was forced to resign, but the incident damaged Egyptian-Israeli relations.

**Nasser and the 1956 Suez Crisis**

The turning point came in February 1955. The number of raids from Gaza into Israel had been steadily increasing. In one such raid an Israeli was killed by an Egyptian squad. In retaliation Ben-Gurion, who had returned as Minister of Defense, ordered a major strike on Gaza on 28 February. Thirty-eight people were killed and the raid was clearly intended as a message to Nasser and the West, showing the strength of Israel’s military capability. Nasser became much more hostile towards Israel, supporting *fedayeen* attacks in early 1955.

His next reaction was to turn to Washington and ask for the USA to supply Egypt with weapons in order that they could defend themselves if there were Israeli attacks. President Dwight D. Eisenhower decided to follow the Arms Limitation Agreement, which the USA, Britain and France had signed in 1950, and refused Egypt’s request. To Nasser it seemed as if he could not get any support from the West and, following the Bandung Conference of non-aligned states in March 1955, began to look elsewhere. In September an agreement was reached with Czechoslovakia (in reality the agreement was with the USSR) who would sell 300 tanks, 200 armoured personnel carriers, 200 MiG-15 fighters and 50 Ilyushin bombers to Egypt. This massive arms shipment threatened to tip the military scales against Israel in favour of Egypt. The Czech arms deal with Egypt immediately spurred Israel into action and Israel entered into an arms agreement with France, which was opposed to Nasser’s Arab nationalism and his support of *FLN* guerrillas in French Algeria. Through the arms agreement, Israel was to be supplied with tanks and aircraft in November 1955. It seemed as if a war was imminent.

Interestingly enough, it was the actions of the USA that were to be the catalyst for the Suez War of 1956. One of Nasser’s major dreams was the building of a dam at Aswan, on the River Nile, to generate hydroelectric power and provide badly needed irrigation for the area. The intention was to increase the amount of land that Egypt had for the cultivation of its crops. The cost of the dam was financed by loans from the World Bank, the USA and Britain. Suddenly, without warning, the USA announced that it would no longer provide any more money for the building of the dam. Britain also told Nasser that it too would no longer make any more loans available. For Nasser, the Aswan Dam was one of his most important and prestigious projects. It would raise his profile in the Arab world and provide the basis for an agricultural and industrial transformation of the Egyptian economy. Nasser’s reaction to the US and British decisions was swift. On 26 July he announced that Egypt had nationalized the Suez Canal, putting it under the control of the Egyptian government. He stated that all revenue from it would now belong to Egypt, not the French- and British-controlled Suez Canal Company. That same day, Egypt closed the Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping and blockaded the Gulf of Aqaba, Israel’s only access to the Red Sea. These actions were in clear violation of international law and the 1949 Armistice Agreements, and were regarded as acts of war by Israel, threatening the small nation militarily and economically.

**SOURCE B**

*The uproar which we anticipated has been taking place in London and Paris. This tremendous uproar is not supported by reason or logic. It is backed only by imperialist methods, by the habits of blood-sucking and of usurping rights, and by interference in the affairs of other countries. An unjustified uproar arose in London, and yesterday Britain submitted a protest to Egypt. I wonder what was the basis of this protest by Britain to Egypt? The Suez Canal Company is an Egyptian company, subject to Egyptian sovereignty. When we nationalized the Suez Canal Company, we*
only nationalized an Egyptian limited company, and by doing so we exercised a right which stems from the very core of Egyptian sovereignty. What right has Britain to interfere in our internal affairs…

From a speech by President Nasser justifying the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company, 28 July 1956

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

QUESTION
According to its origin and purpose, what are the value and limitations of Source B for historians studying the Suez Crisis? (6 marks would be awarded for two documents, so this should be marked out of 3 or 4.)

Student Answer A – Ted
The source is an extract from a speech by President Nasser on 28 July 1956 and has the purpose to affirm Nasser’s justification for the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company, but more importantly to stress Britain’s interference in Egypt’s affairs, condemning them for their imperialist methods which employ neither reason nor logic. Nasser provokes the reader with an image of a greedy and selfish Britain, displaying his antipathy.

The speech’s value lies in the fact that it provides the reader with a first-hand speech experience by Nasser to demonstrate his opinion of the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company. Thus the reader can assess the extract in respect to international interferences into the internal affairs of Egypt and acquire a subjective view of the country. The book’s limitations are distinguished in its subjectivity of speech, enforcing political bias. Therefore, the reader is confronted with one perspective of the issue instead of an objective view, which limits the reader’s evaluation of the big picture.

Student Answer B – Mark
The origin of the source is a speech by President Nasser made on 28 July 1956. Its purpose is to justify the nationalization of the Suez Canal. Furthermore, it is aimed at convincing the public that the act was justified in the face of British and French claims on Egyptian land. Nasser thus wants to make clear that Britain and France have no rights over Egyptian territory. The value of the source is that it shows how the nationalization of the canal was presented to the Egyptian public. It demonstrates that the foreign countries Britain and France were presented as ‘imperialist’ powers.

A limitation of the source is that it is politically biased and only shows the views of the Egyptian president, which will be subjective, especially because the speech aims at shaping the Egyptian public’s opinion. Other views which may see the event more objectively are not considered.

Student Answer C – Pablo
Because of the source’s purpose, it should not be regarded as flawless and its limitations must be considered. Of course, an historian would not be able to extract from the speech the nature of Britain and France’s intervention, and so the extent of Egyptian right to the Canal cannot be determined. Nasser simply makes claims to the area, but the accuracy of his sole right to it cannot be determined from this source because of the president’s aims to convince.

The source is limited in the information it reveals, and thus its main strength is that it can convey the extent of Egypt’s anger towards Britain and France. Through the source, historians can discover to what extent Nasser believed his actions justified and his claim to the Canal region undeniable. This, of course, would generally allow for an interpretation of why he believed British and French intervention in the area was unjustifiable. A general explanation of Arab nationalism at the time can be discovered.
Nasser’s decision to nationalize the Suez Canal was the last straw for France. It had decided, early in 1956, that Nasser needed to be deposed and now seriously began to find a means to achieve this goal. Naturally Britain might be willing to assist, but an attack on Egypt by two permanent members of the Security Council of the UN would be seen as unacceptable by the Arab states and the rest of world opinion. Another country with extensive grievances against Nasser was Israel. Nasser’s Egypt permitted fedayeen attacks onto Israeli territory, blockaded Israeli shipping and took an aggressive stance against Israel. So it was in Israel’s direction that the French decided to go. By the end of September 1956, an agreement had been reached between the two countries that action against Egypt should be taken as soon as possible. But this action would need the support of the British, particularly as it had bases in the Mediterranean that could provide support for any military operation.

**Examiner’s comments**

Look at the style, tone and use of language when answering this type of question. There are three very different approaches here. Which is better and why? Pablo does not follow the rubric (the instructions in the question) and ignores the origin. His line of argument is hard to follow. Ted writes in a rather wordy way, which tends to hide what he means and it can be a little hard to follow what he is saying, although some of his points are good. Mark is succinct and easy to follow, but has he done enough for full marks? Yes, he has. The four parts of the rubric are easily identifiable, there is a clear understanding of the source and Mark has analyzed the source well, although his last sentence does not add to his analysis.

**Source C**

A 1956 photograph of the Suez Canal showing the actions taken by the Egyptian government.

**Examiner’s hint**

Try to find two clear points and give some explanation to show your understanding of them.

**Student Study Section**

**Question**

What message is conveyed by Source C?
The involvement of Britain, France and Israel in the Suez Crisis

The British government’s attitude towards Nasser was clear. The seizure of the Suez Canal had been damaging to British influence in the Middle East and had severe financial implications, as most of the oil that was supplied to Britain had to pass through the canal. At the same time, Nasser’s refusal to join the Baghdad Pact and his negotiation of the Czech arms deal seemed to imply that Nasser was becoming closer to the USSR, further threatening British interests in the region. The relationship between Britain and Israel was somewhat strained, but eventually, by October 1956, Britain had realized that it was in her best interests to enter into a three-way agreement with France and Israel. At a secret meeting in Paris, attended by Ben-Gurion, Britain, France and Israel came up with a plan.

SOURCE D

The results of the conversations which took place at Sèvres from 22–24 October 1956 between the representatives of the Governments of the United Kingdom, the State of Israel and of France are the following:

1. The Israeli forces launch in the evening of 29 October 1956 a large scale attack on the Egyptian forces with the aim of reaching the Canal Zone the following day.

On being apprised of these events, the British and French Governments during the day of 30 October 1956 respectively and simultaneously make two appeals to the Egyptian Government and the Israeli Government on the following lines:

2. A. To the Egyptian Government
   a) halt all acts of war.
   b) withdraw all its troops ten miles from the Canal.
   c) accept temporary occupation of key positions on the Canal by the Anglo-French forces to guarantee freedom of passage through the Canal by vessels of all nations until a final settlement.

B. To the Israeli Government
   a) halt all acts of war.
   b) withdraw all its troops ten miles to the east of the Canal.

In addition, the Israeli Government will be notified that the French and British Governments have demanded of the Egyptian Government to accept temporary occupation of key positions along the Canal by Anglo-French forces.

It is agreed that if one of the Governments refused, or did not give its consent, within twelve hours the Anglo-French forces would intervene with the means necessary to ensure that their demands are accepted.

C. The representatives of the three Governments agree that the Israeli Government will not be required to meet the conditions in the appeal addressed to it, in the event that the Egyptian Government does not accept those in the appeal addressed to it for their part.

3. In the event that the Egyptian Government should fail to agree within the stipulated time to the conditions of the appeal addressed to it, the Anglo-French forces will launch military operations against the Egyptian forces in the early hours of the morning of 31 October.

4. The Israeli Government will send forces to occupy the western shore of the Gulf of Aqaba and the group of islands Tiran and Sanafir to ensure freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba.

5. Israel undertakes not to attack Jordan during the period of operations against Egypt. But in the event that during the same period Jordan should attack Israel, the British Government undertakes not to come to the aid of Jordan.

6. The arrangements of the present protocol must remain strictly secret.

7. They will enter into force after the agreement of the three Governments.

From The Sèvres Protocol, October 1956
The plan was based on an Israeli attack into the Sinai Peninsula, initially to destroy _fedayeen_ camps that existed there. The Israelis would advance to the Gulf of Aqaba, seemingly to open up the Red Sea to allow Israeli ships free access to its waters. The British would then issue an ultimatum to both Israel and Egypt to withdraw to positions 16km (10 miles) from either side of the Suez Canal. It was predicted that Nasser would refuse to withdraw his forces, which would give Britain and France the excuse to intervene militarily to protect the Suez Canal, with the result that Nasser would be removed from power either by the joint Franco-British force, or by the Egyptians themselves. Israel would then be able to occupy the entire Sinai Peninsula. The fatal mistake of Britain, France and Israel was their determination to go ahead with the attack without having received support from Washington.

**SOURCE E**

Ministers had already considered at several meetings the ways in which the situation might develop. These had also been canvassed with the French. On October 25th the Cabinet discussed the specific possibility of conflict between Israel and Egypt and decided in principle how it would react if this occurred. The Governments of France and the United Kingdom should, it considered, at once call on both parties to stop hostilities and withdraw their forces to a distance from either bank of the canal. If one or both failed to comply within a definite period, then British and French forces would intervene as a temporary measure to separate the combatants. To ensure this being effective, they would have to occupy key positions at Port Said, Ismailia and Suez. Our purpose was to safeguard free passage through the canal, if it were threatened with becoming a zone of warfare, and to arrest the spread of fighting in the Middle East.


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**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**(QUESTION)**

This document has been widely regarded by most observers as one of the most cynical of the 20th century. Make a list of any of its terms you would refer to in order to agree with this statement. It is also very difficult to find the original copy of it in Britain. Why do you think this is?

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**EXAMINER’S HINT**

*Question (a)* – this question is invariably the first type of question you will see on Paper 1. Find three points and try to paraphrase the source.

*Question (b)* – this question is invariably the second question on Paper 1 after 1a) and 1b). Remember to link the sources.

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On 29 October, Israel dropped a paratroop force into the Sinai. On 31 October, Britain and France issued the agreed-upon ultimatum, which Israel followed and, as anticipated, Nasser ignored. On 5 November a combined British-French force attacked Port Said. The invasion was greeted by an international protest, not least by British public opinion. In Washington, Eisenhower was furious at the actions that had been taken by Britain, France and Israel, particularly as he was involved in his own presidential election campaign. He was also very concerned that the Soviet Union might use the crisis as an excuse to intervene in the Middle East and the US government issued the following warning.
**SOURCE F**

If power-hungry Communists should either falsely or correctly estimate that the Middle East is inadequately defended, they might be tempted to use open measures of armed attack. If so, that would start a chain of circumstances which would almost surely involve the United States in military action. I am convinced that the best insurance against this dangerous contingency is to make clear now our readiness to cooperate fully and freely with our friends of the Middle East in ways consonant with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. I intend promptly to send a special mission to the Middle East to explain the cooperation we are prepared to give.

*From US Department of State Press Release 604, 29 November 1956*

The United States proposed a resolution to the UN Security Council on 30 October calling for the ending of military actions, a proposal that was quickly vetoed by Britain and France. The USA then went directly to the General Assembly where, on 1 November, a resolution was passed by a vote of 64 to 5 calling for an immediate ceasefire and condemning the aggressor nations. Britain and France ignored the UN action and continued their military campaigns. Despite being involved in the Hungarian uprising, the Soviets made it known that they were considering taking military action against Israel. Eisenhower and Dulles then put tremendous pressure on the British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, to end the operation. The USA threatened to cut off oil supplies to Britain, withdraw US funds from London banks and block any loans from the International Monetary Fund to aid Britain’s depleted sterling reserves. In the face of such opposition, Britain informed France that it would no longer support their actions and on 6 November Britain and France agreed to a ceasefire, although Israeli forces still remained in the Sinai.

**SOURCE G**

The Suez crisis has haunted British governments ever since 1956 – it hung over Margaret Thatcher during the 1982 Falklands War, and its ghost now moves between the Foreign Office and Downing Street, between Jack Straw and Tony Blair. For Suez destroyed a British prime minister – along, almost, with the Anglo-American alliance – and symbolised the end of the British Empire. It killed many civilians – all Egyptian, of course – and brought shame upon the allies when they turned out to have committed war crimes. It rested on a lie – that British and French troops should land in Egypt to ‘separate’ the Egyptian and Israeli armies, even though the British and French had earlier connived at Israel’s invasion. Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser was described by the British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, as ‘the Mussolini of the Nile’ even though, scarcely a year earlier, Eden had warmly shaken Nasser’s hand in an exchange of congratulations over a new Anglo-Egyptian treaty… In the end, British troops – poorly equipped and treating their Egyptian enemies with racial disdain – left in humiliation, digging up their dead comrades from their graves to freight back home lest the Egyptians defiled their bodies.


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**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**QUESTION**

Answer this question first, and then look at the Examiner’s Comments afterwards. According to its origin and purpose, what are the value and limitations of **Source G** for historians studying the Suez Crisis? (6 marks would be awarded for two documents, so this should be marked out of 3 or 4.)
Student Answer – Julian

Source G is an extract from the article ‘New Crisis, Old Lesson – The Suez Crisis of 1956‘, by Robert Fisk from The Independent. Its purpose is to inform readers of the crises the Suez Canal has provoked in Britain in the past. Furthermore it examines the attitude of British leaders towards the situation in the Middle East during the Suez Crisis of 1956. The value of Source G lies in its origin. The article originates from 2003, thus being quite recent, and allows for an examination of the Suez Crisis from several points of view as well as from the later historical context of the United Kingdom. The actions of the British government during the Suez Crisis have come under intense scrutiny. The limitations of the source lie in its tone and the type of language used in it. The journalist, Robert Fisk, has a critical stance to the actions of the British during the Suez Crisis. This has an effect on the tone of the document which is rather judgemental, and thus makes the source biased. This makes it difficult for historians to obtain objective information from Source G.

Examiner’s comments

This is the sort of extract that is very common in the IB Paper 1 examination. One of the points to note is the year in which it was written. Is this a value, or a limitation, or both, depending on which way you view it? Explain your answer. The comments about the tone of the article should be noted, as the language and tone of a source can help you to judge its values and limitations. What words used by Fisk would show that his position might not be truly objective?

QUESTION

Do you agree with Fisk’s analysis of the Suez Crisis? Explain your answer.

The consequences of the 1956 Suez Crisis

The Suez Crisis had important and long-lasting consequences for all of the countries involved. The biggest losers were certainly Britain and France. Eden was forced to resign in January 1957 and his denials of responsibility damaged the credibility of Britain in the eyes of the world. Britain and France lost a considerable amount of influence in the Middle East and, following France’s defeats in Algeria, were soon to become of minor importance in the region. Guy Mollet’s government resigned in May 1957 (Mollet was the French Prime Minister between 1956 and 1957). Britain and France’s influence in the Middle East was taken over by the USA and the USSR, who began to pursue a more active role there.

In 1957, Eisenhower proclaimed the existence of ‘the Eisenhower Doctrine’, which promised military and economic aid to Middle Eastern countries who needed it to contain any communist expansion. Eisenhower’s rationale behind this doctrine was that ‘the existing vacuum in the Middle East must be filled by the United States before it was filled by the Soviet Union’ (Charles Smith, Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 2007).

The United States further insisted on a complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Sinai Peninsula and supported the UN in the installation of a UN Emergency Force (UNEF) to replace them as a buffer between Egypt and Israel. The USA supported Israel diplomatically, although Suez had shown how much leverage the USA could exercise in the region, and the Soviet Union continued its implicit support of Egypt.

The Middle East had now become a part of the Cold War. While not having gained anything territorially from the Suez War, Israel was well satisfied by the outcome, as now Israel’s own borders were guaranteed by UNEF. It also gained access for Israeli shipping into the Gulf of Aqaba from Eilat, providing Israel with a Red Sea port. Israel’s military victory demonstrated what a potent force its armed forces had become and the Israelis learned several key military lessons that were to be useful in the future.
Somewhat ironically, although Nasser was on the losing side in the war, Egypt gained considerably. It had taken over control of the Suez Canal from Britain and France and had also seized a considerable number of British assets in the area. The Aswan Dam project continued its course and Egypt began to develop economically. UNEF also provided protection from any Israeli military action. To the Arab world, Nasser was the first leader successfully to challenge the West and for some years to come he was seen as the voice of Arab nationalist aspirations. In 1958, Egypt joined with Syria to create the United Arab Republic, a union that the Israelis saw as threatening. As you will see later, the immediate consequences of the 1956 Suez Crisis, which resulted in the decision to open both the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping, were to be instrumental in causing the next war to break out between the Arabs and the Israelis in June 1967.

**SOURCE H**

![Cartoon in the Swiss satirical magazine Nebelspalters in Zurich, 28 November 1956.](image)

**STUDENT STUDY SECTION**

**QUESTIONS**

a) Study this cartoon carefully. Look at each of the six panels and, in as much detail as you can, summarize the message conveyed by each panel. The man on the left is President Nasser of Egypt. What is the overall message of the cartoon?

b) Using Sources B, D, E, G and H in this section, and your own knowledge, analyze to what extent the actions of the British and French governments in October 1956 were merely to ‘separate the Egyptian and Israeli armies’ (Source G). (8 marks)
Student Answer (Question b) – Debby

Although the British and French governments claimed that their actions and policies were to act as mediators between the Egyptians and Israelis, in reality their motives were clearly aimed at weakening Nasser and re-establishing control of the Suez Canal.

In 1956 Nasser had nationalized the Suez Canal Company exercising, what he saw, as a ‘right which stems from the very core of Egyptian sovereignty’ (Source B). The British and French governments saw this as a deliberate attempt to destabilize their position in the Middle East. Britain was worried about oil supplies in Iraq and France had been expelled from Indochina by Ho Chi Minh. Although Britain claimed that its purpose was to ‘safeguard free passage through the canal ... and arrest the spread of fighting in the Middle East’ (Source E), it is clear from the secret Sèvres protocol signed between itself, France and Israel that Britain was far from being a neutral observer. The Protocol clearly shows in term 2A clause c) that the aim was to re-establish a military presence in Egypt (Source D). It was apparent that all three signatories of the Protocol were aware that Egypt would not agree to its terms, which would give them an excuse to invade – Clauses 3 and 4 (Source D). The date of 25 October in Source E is also important as the Cabinet is meeting after the Sèvres Protocol had been signed, which clearly shows that it knew of the agreement between the three governments before making its statement about the purpose of its actions – and this therefore seems to support Fisk’s claims (Source G).

Nasser’s popularity among the Arab states and the increase of nationalism had become the justification for Western powers to desire his overthrow. The fact that he had bought arms from Czechoslovakia and the USSR meant that, to the west, the Soviets were establishing a proxy base in the Middle East. The USA was extremely concerned about this increasing Soviet presence in the region. It is interesting to note that Source H, from a Swiss magazine, supports the idea that Nasser was provoking Israel by his actions, being supported by some other Arab states, whereas Source G blatantly accuses France, Britain and Israel as acting together to weaken Nasser. Fisk maintains that they ‘connived at Israel’s invasion’ (Source G) indicating a clear intention behind their actions.

Thus, despite claims that the actions of the British and French were to ensure stability in the region, it seems clear that their real intention was to destabilize Nasser and regain control of the Suez Canal.

Examiner’s comments

This is an excellent answer. All of the sources are used, even with Source H’s counter-argument, and there is a focused attempt to answer the question. The sources have been used to support the claims made by Debby and are not simply mechanically applied. There is also good use of Debby’s own knowledge. This would certainly receive top marks.

REVIEW SECTION

This chapter has dealt with the historical causes of the conflict between the Arabs and the Zionists/Israelis, has analyzed the significance of the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and has explored the causes, course and consequences of the 1948 and 1956 wars between the Arab states and Israel. Respond to the following questions/activities briefly using information from the text, the sources and your own knowledge.

Review questions

1. What are the major issues which separate the Arabs and the Israelis? Where do these originate?
2. Analyze the reasons behind the UNSCOP plan for the partition of Palestine. In your opinion was there an alternative solution?
3. Draw up a table to compare the 1948 and 1956 wars. Use the headings: Causes and Consequences.