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AT THE WAILING WALL: In a week in which Israeli troops smashed Egypt's army in the Sinai, took all of Jordan west of the Jordan River, and seized Syrian heights overlooking Galilee, the emotional high point for Israel was the capture of the Old City of Jerusalem with its Jewish holy place, the Wailing Wall. Picture shows Israeli soldiers looking up at the wall, last remnant of the second Temple.

Victor

Its Task Now Is to Secure the Peace

On the beaches of Tel Aviv last Friday, heads turned upward as Israeli jets screamed back over the Mediterranean at short intervals from their targets in Syria. But the nation's thoughts, with victory in this final battle taken for granted, were on the ground. Territory—the map of the Bible lands—was what preoccupied the Israelis. They had altered the map drastically in their six-day war with the Arabs. They held it to be self-evident that the map cannot be put together again in anything like the shape it held before the war began.

Whatever the world may think about who started what, the Israelis have achieved by force of arms something they have longed for since the state was established in the 1948 war of independence: their own military security.

Fighting Deeds

They won independence not only by their own fighting deeds but with the diplomatic help of the United States and the Soviet Union, among others. They fought and won a brilliant military campaign in 1956 with the help of France and Britain.

This time the Israelis have done it alone. No one has been on their side. In the military sense, international diplomacy hindered them, if anything. Only intense American pressure held them back for three weeks while the Arab armies strengthened their positions and President Nasser took over the Sinai peninsula and Sharm el Sheik, the height that controls access to Israel's southern port of Elath.

Then, convinced they had only themselves to count on if they wanted to avert a process of slow strangulation, they decided to strike out in force at the first provocation. The provocation—one more light shelling by the Syrians and Jordanians—was not long in coming. What followed amazed the world.

Crushing Assault

Israel's planes, apparently avoiding the Egyptian radar network by sweeping in low over the Mediterranean, smashed the Egyptian air force on the ground—and the air forces of Jordan and Syria as well. With complete command of the air, Israeli armor routed the Egyptian force in the Sinai, drove to the Suez Canal, broke the blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba, destroyed the vaunted Jordanian army, took all of Jordan west of the Jordan River (including the Old City of Jerusalem), and, regrouping to the north, drove into Syria to occupy the hilly bases of Arab terrorist attacks against Israeli villages of the past several years.

At the weekend, worn and even somewhat bewildered by the extent of what had happened, the Israelis did not want to take on a series of tough diplomatic battles in the United Nations and in the major capitals of the world. But they also made clear that if they have to, they will.

Some of the things achieved in the past week will not be given up—an Israeli, from the lowest to the highest, could not repeat that too often. Israel, said the Information Ministry, "cannot return to the 1949 armistice agreement and the boundaries determined by those agreements."

Somehow, the Israelis felt, the world is going to have to realize the new Middle East map that they brought about last week with so much blood. There was a sense of shock already beginning to seep through the exultation of victory in Israel, because of hints that some Western powers were beginning to act as though nothing had changed.

For example, in Jerusalem, before the chapter written last week, most Governments had a single consul who dealt with the Israelis and Jordanians separately and independently of their countries' Ambassadors in Tel Aviv and Amman.

The Israeli leaders said last week, as clearly as possible, that they would not give up the Old City. But they were worried. There were reports that some Western powers were instructing their envoys in Tel Aviv to leave it to the consuls in Jerusalem to discuss the Old City's affairs with the Israelis. Also, instructions to Western diplomats in Tel Aviv were that questions about Israeli possession of all the territory from the Old City to the western bank of the Jordan River remain in the province of the consuls rather than in the hands of the Ambassadors in Tel Aviv.

This attitude was viewed by the Israelis as unrealistic. If King Hussein of Jordan still has a throne, they felt, it is only through the grace of the Israelis, whose armies could have swept across the eastern part of his country without much difficulty. What happens to King Hussein and his country now is as much a matter for the Israelis to decide, in their view, as it is for the British, for example.

There was an inevitable tendency among Israelis to cast their minds back to 1956, when their fruits of military victory were plucked from them in United Nations debates and in various chancelleries. But the Israelis hold a stronger hand for the next round in the diplomatic poker game: four aces, in fact. And four aces, it was said in Tel Aviv, can be beaten only by a straight flush that is not in sight for any other of the interested parties.

What the Israelis wanted from the world's major powers at this point was, mainly, one thing: that the powers tell Israel and the Arabs that they must settle territorial problems between themselves—that in effect, the usefulness of the United Nations or any other separate capital in these questions is no longer meaningful.

The time, as the Israelis saw it, had come for peace in the Middle East, an enduring peace and not one that would tremble at every upheaval in the Arab world and be shattered by one Arab ruler or another every 10 years. To talk of restoring some structure based on the 1948 armistice agreement is futile, in their view. It would be, they said, as though the victorious allies in World War II had decided at Yalta and Potsdam to use the Versailles Treaty as a basis for the settlement with Germany in 1945.

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