

Levi Eshkol, Forgotten Hero

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A recent conference held at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem examined the question of “Leadership in the Crucible of Decision.” Though the focus was on Israeli prime ministers of the last decade—Yitzhak Rabin, Benjamin Netanyahu, Yitzhak Shamir, and Ehud Barak—participating historians referred at length to the earlier models of Menachem Begin, Moshe Sharett, and David Ben-Gurion. The event was followed by a Haifa University symposium devoted to the legacy of another Israeli leader, Moshe Dayan. Conspicuously missing from these colloquia was any mention, much less serious discussion, of a leader whose contributions to the creation of modern Israel were extraordinary, and who guided the country through a desperate crisis to its greatest military triumph. Completely ignored was Israel’s third prime minister, Levi Eshkol.¹

To date, not a single scholarly biography of Eshkol has been written, nor has any sustained effort been made to analyze his policies, his leadership style, or his role in Israel’s creation—this in contrast to the many works documenting the lives of other founders and leading figures of the Jewish state.² Nor is the neglect of Eshkol confined to the academic world. Israeli high-school textbooks scarcely refer to him. *The Twentieth*

Century: On the Brink of Tomorrow, edited by Eyal Naveh, mentions Eshkol solely as the official whom Dayan once replaced as defense minister. Eliezer Dumka's *The World and the Jews in Recent Generations* is even less generous, describing Eshkol as an insignificant politician whose "hesitant image" helped lure the Arabs toward war.³ Educational surveys conducted to ascertain whether Israeli students can identify key historical figures such as Theodor Herzl, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, and Chaim Weizmann do not even bother to ask, "Who was Levi Eshkol?"

The consignment of Eshkol to historical obscurity is due largely to perceptions of his performance in the period of the Six Day War. With Arab armies amassed on Israel's border beginning in mid-May of 1967, both the army and the public favored a prompt and devastating strike to pre-empt the Arab attack. Eshkol seemed hesitant, worrying over internal political issues and the possible reaction of world powers. Public opinion at the time held that stronger and more dynamic figures such as Ben-Gurion or Dayan would act at once to ensure Israel's survival. As a result of that pressure, Eshkol ultimately was forced to step down from his post as defense minister—he remained prime minister—and to appoint Dayan in his stead. When Israel did finally act, many Israelis believed that it was in spite of, rather than thanks to, Eshkol.

Nor did Eshkol's image help create the impression of a great leader. Not charismatic, neither a seasoned warrior nor a skilled orator, Eshkol cut a bland figure. At 72 years old in 1967, he was well beyond his physical prime, balding and bespectacled and notoriously indifferent to dress. And in contrast to the younger generation of Israelis raised on military service and Hebrew culture, Eshkol was a product of the Yiddish-speaking diaspora. His unassuming demeanor and Old World accent lacked the elan demanded by native-born Israelis, especially in a time of war. Once fighting broke out, Israel's successes were invariably credited not to Eshkol but to his defense minister and political opponent, Moshe Dayan, who had joined the government only days before the war, or to the

generals headed by Yitzhak Rabin, who was chief of staff of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Indeed, when Israelis were surveyed as to who deserved to be “man of the year” for 1967, 42 percent favored Rabin, and 27 percent gave the nod to Dayan, while the prime minister, Levi Eshkol, was chosen by only 10 percent.⁴

To many Israelis in 1967, then, Eshkol was the wrong leader at the wrong historical moment. The conventional wisdom maintained that if not for his wavering, Israel would have attacked sooner and incurred fewer losses, yet would still have received the full support of the United States. The IDF would still have captured the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank and Gaza, Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights, and would have been able to retain them in the aftermath of the war. Subjected to this judgment, overshadowed by his more colorful contemporaries, Eshkol was relegated to the recesses of Israel’s collective memory. In the decades that followed, retrieving him from that obscurity and challenging the preconceptions about him proved to be difficult if not impossible. In his 1979 memoirs, Yitzhak Rabin lamented that the damage done to Eshkol’s reputation “was a great injustice that history may yet address.”⁵

Today, however, that injustice may finally be addressed and Eshkol restored to his rightful historical place. Archives in Israel, North America, and Great Britain have now completed the declassification of documents from the Six Day War period. These papers, together with published memoirs and oral-history interviews of former senior officials, provide unprecedented insights into Israeli decision-making both before and during the war. They also paint a highly detailed and surprising portrait of Levi Eshkol and the pivotal role he played in winning the Six Day War.

The Eshkol that emerges is complex: Courageous yet wary, flexible but resilient, he combined an engaging personality with an unswerving dedication to his people and homeland. Rather than dictate his positions, Eshkol listened carefully to opponents and allies alike, and worked hard to forge a broad consensus before deciding on fundamental issues. Most

importantly, Eshkol is revealed as neither weak nor indecisive, but rather as tenacious and single-minded, especially on matters vital to Israel's security and its diplomatic standing.

That tenacity and conviction served Eshkol in vastly strengthening Israel's defense in the years before 1967. He modernized and expanded the IDF, transforming it into a highly mobile army capable of winning a multiple-front war against formidable enemies. Moreover, Eshkol understood far better than other Israeli statesmen the necessity of guaranteeing American support for Israel, and of resisting pressure to initiate military action before that support was secured. Once the Six Day War began, however, he rebuffed international demands to halt Israel's advance before it had achieved its objectives. Throughout this struggle, Eshkol maintained and even broadened his coalition government, rallying hawks and doves, religious and secular Jews, around his policy. Finally, Eshkol was pivotal in determining the outcome of the two most fateful battles in the war—indeed, in all of Israel's history—for Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

With the help of newly released documents, the record of Eshkol's performance in May and June of 1967 can now be reconstructed. It is the story of a man whose personal strength ultimately proved indomitable, and whose unconventional style of leadership was singularly appropriate for its time.

II

Born near Kiev in 1895, the second of ten children, Levi Shkolnik grew up on his family's prosperous farm, where he was exposed to the influences of Hasidism, Orthodox Judaism, and Zionism. Barred from attending local public schools, he was sent to the Hebrew Gymnasium in Vilna, where he joined the Young Zionist organization and came under

the influence of Yosef Sprinzak, the founder of the Hapo'el Hatzai'ir socialist pioneer movement. At age 19, he emigrated to Palestine. Declining his parents' offer of financial support—"only if I come empty-handed will these hands be ready to work," he explained—he found employment as an itinerant laborer laying pipes, planting trees, and picking the grape clusters whose Hebrew name—*eshkol*—he soon took as his own.⁶

Eshkol's arrival coincided with the end of the Second Aliya and the outbreak of World War I. After a brief stint with the British army in Palestine, Eshkol helped enlist unemployed laborers in new agricultural collectives and established a kibbutz, Degania Bet, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Increasingly active in public affairs, he was among the founders of the Mapai party and the Histadrut labor federation, and went on to fill key positions in the Zionist administration: He headed the Jewish National Fund campaign to purchase arable land and, in 1934, traveled to Germany to supervise the transfer of Jewish capital to Palestine. In 1937 he was responsible for one of Zionism's greatest prestate achievements: The creation of a national water utility, Mekorot, which, he said, would crisscross the country with pipelines "like the veins of a human body."⁷ He served as Mapai party secretary (1942-1945) and chairman of the Tel Aviv Labor Council (1947)—his first political posts—and attended several Zionist Congresses. During the war in 1948, as the first director-general of Israel's Ministry of Defense, he proved instrumental in transforming the Hagana into the unified Israel Defense Forces, and in obtaining the arms, supplies, and manpower necessary for achieving Israel's independence.

After the war, Eshkol continued to work at the Jewish Agency, creating 400 settlements over the next three years, and serving as the agency's treasurer. In the face of unremitting fiscal crises, he mobilized the resources to sustain Israel's economy and to absorb over 700,000 immigrants, many of them destitute. Eshkol's success in public affairs led to his election to the Knesset in 1951 and, the following year, to his appointment as minister of finance, a portfolio which took advantage of his

outstanding financial and administrative skills. Wrestling with severe shortages of housing, foreign currency, and jobs, he nevertheless managed to stabilize the national budget and institute a viable tax system. Under his management, educational and social programs expanded, and electrical networks and roadways were laid. Eshkol encouraged the establishment of the Bank of Israel and the Ministry of Industry and Trade, though both curtailed his ministerial prerogatives; in spite of his own socialist orientation, he often opposed Histadrut demands for higher wages. By combining rapid industrialization with a flexible fiscal policy, Eshkol brought Israel's growth rate to 11 percent, exceeded only by Japan's.⁸

Although he had earned himself a public image as a proficient but uninspiring administrator, people who knew him personally would later dwell upon his warm and colorful personality. "Talkative, overflowing with simplicity and humor," was how Rabin described him, while Ezer Weizman remembered him as "a lovable man, easygoing... open, a grand conversationalist." Though he dealt with sums of money in the millions, Eshkol cared little for either material possessions or appearances. Aryeh Eliav, a longtime ministerial aid, recalled how "I learned to love the wise, warm-hearted, humorous man of the fields... the wonderful Jew, Eshkol."⁹

The rare blend of competence and charm might have propelled Eshkol to greater prominence if not for the overpowering presence of David Ben-Gurion, Israel's prime minister throughout most of the state's first decade and a half. Ben-Gurion the visionary, the fiery orator and charismatic leader, was Eshkol's opposite in almost every way. For this reason, perhaps, Ben-Gurion selected Eshkol as his successor when, in June 1963, the prime minister abruptly resigned in the midst of an ongoing controversy over an abortive intelligence operation in Egypt nine years earlier.¹⁰ Ben-Gurion quit, but was convinced that his judgment would soon be vindicated and his post readily reclaimed—a judgment which proved to be mistaken, as Eshkol began proving himself as prime minister.¹¹

In Eshkol's first years in office, much of his attention was devoted to the construction of a national water carrier to channel fresh water from

the Sea of Galilee southward to irrigate the Negev desert. “The Eshkol years were devoted to the reclamation and endowment of both land and water,” recalled a senior aide from this period, Yossi Sarid. “[They] will always be remembered as the vintage years of the Zionist harvest....” Striving for national reconciliation, Eshkol also dismantled the military administration that had been imposed on Israeli Arabs since 1948, and agreed to repatriate the remains of Ze’ev Jabotinsky, founder of the Revisionist movement, and to rebury them on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. In addition, he instituted regular meetings with the leaders of the opposition, marking an end to the political isolation of the Herut party, led by Menachem Begin.¹²

Equally impressive was Eshkol’s performance in foreign affairs, an area in which he had little prior expertise. He strengthened Israel’s ties with Africa, established diplomatic relations with West Germany, and worked to ease tensions between Israel and the Soviet Union. To the Arab world, Eshkol proposed a comprehensive peace treaty based on direct negotiations, funds for refugee resettlement, and “full respect for the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of all the states in the region.”¹³

But Eshkol’s crowning achievement in foreign policy was his June 1964 visit to the White House—the first by a prime minister of the Jewish state. President Lyndon Baines Johnson, himself a plain-talking ex-farmer, immediately warmed to Eshkol. “The United States is foursquare behind Israel on all matters that affect... their vital security interests,” the president told him: “The prime minister could leave knowing that the U.S. will help Israel in the future, both morally and financially, as much as she can.” Within a year of assuming office, Eshkol had brought Israeli-American relations to unprecedented heights, but he refused to indulge in overconfidence. Presciently, he asked the president:

We are told that there is a United States commitment to Israel....
But... what if one day Nasser... were to attack Israel? Would Israel be

strong enough to protect itself? No one could forecast what other problems the U.S. would have at that time.¹⁴

Eshkol's accomplishments as prime minister were indeed prodigious, but no less so than his success as defense minister, the other portfolio he inherited from Ben-Gurion. Though he had never commanded troops, Eshkol possessed a clear sense of the threats facing Israel and of the materiel it required to overcome them. Accordingly, he embarked on an accelerated modernization program that transformed Israel's air and armored forces into rapidly deployable and potent weapons. Wary of France's changing Middle East policy, Eshkol reduced Israel's dependence on French arms by purchasing American-made Patton tanks and Skyhawk fighters.¹⁵ He also enhanced Israel's intelligence-gathering capabilities and reformed the army's command structure. Under his aegis, some of the IDF's most capable generals were retained and promoted, among them Yitzhak Rabin, whom Eshkol appointed to a three-year term as chief of staff in January 1964, and whose tenure he extended in late 1966 for an additional year.

The strengthening of the IDF did not, however, allay Eshkol's concerns for Israel's security. He closely monitored Arab acquisitions of chemical weapons, heavy bombers, and long-range missiles, aware of the destruction they could wreak on Israeli cities. For him, Israel was *shimshon der nebechdiker*—Samson the weakling—at once invincible and mortally vulnerable. “Okay, okay,” he responded when, in 1966, intelligence officials assured him that the Arab world was internally divided and incapable of waging war before 1970. “But what if intelligence is wrong?” Learning that the armored corps had ammunition reserves for only three days of fighting, Eshkol had them doubled. In contrast to the complacency exhibited by many of Israel's political and military leaders in the mid-1960s, Eshkol repeatedly stressed the need to prepare for a simultaneous attack by several Arab countries.¹⁶

Determined to preserve Israel's deterrent power, yet careful not to precipitate a regional conflict, Eshkol maintained a policy of limited retaliation against Arab aggression. Such reprisals became necessary in 1964, when the Syrians tried to undermine the national water carrier project by diverting the Jordan River at its source within Syrian territory, and began firing on Israeli farmers attempting to cultivate demilitarized zones along the northern border. Starting in 1965, Damascus also promoted terrorist attacks on Israel by Yasser Arafat and his Fatah gunmen. Eshkol reacted forcibly, authorizing for the first time the use of Israeli jets against Syrian positions on the Golan Heights and directing the IDF to retaliate against Fatah strongholds in the West Bank. "The notepad is open and the hand is writing," he declared after a spate of terrorist bombings, intimating that vengeance would soon be exacted. Yet Eshkol refrained from ordering a large-scale attack against Syria. Such an offensive, he feared, could trigger a comprehensive Middle East war in which the Soviet Union would intervene directly, and the United States, already bogged down in Vietnam, could not come to Israel's defense. Fresh in his mind was the 1956 Suez crisis, in which the Americans, resentful that Israel had launched an offensive against Egypt with the backing of the French and British, joined with the Soviets in forcing the IDF to withdraw from Gaza and Sinai.¹⁷

The mounting threats to Israel's security were exploited by Eshkol's critics, in particular Ben-Gurion. Despairing of a rapid return to power, the former prime minister had formed his own party—Rafi (*Reshimat Po'alei Yisrael*—Israel Workers' List)—along with his younger proteges, Shimon Peres and Moshe Dayan. Ben-Gurion reproached Eshkol for allegedly neglecting the Franco-Israeli alliance at a time of mounting border friction, and for relying exclusively on the United States.

Such obloquy from a person he had always revered deeply offended Eshkol—"It was like a father throwing him out of Eden," his wife, Miriam, recalled—yet he resolved to fight back. He allied Mapai with the more

left-wing but security-minded Ahdut Ha'avoda (Labor Unity) party, and trounced Rafi in the October 1965 elections. But then Israel's economy fell into an unprecedented slump, with unemployment reaching 12.4 percent in the first half of 1967 and growth plummeting to a mere 1 percent. Segments of the populace began to doubt Eshkol's ability to restore security and reverse the economic slowdown.¹⁸

Political and economic difficulties did not, however, divert Eshkol from responding forcibly to Arab aggression. Thus, on April 7, 1967, after Syrian guns opened fire on border settlements, Eshkol again ordered in the air force, which shot down six Syrian planes. Damascus retaliated with another wave of terrorist attacks. "We have no choice," Eshkol told a forum of his Mapai party on May 12. "We may well have to act against the centers of aggression and those who encourage it by means no less serious than those we used on April 7."¹⁹

III

The approaching confrontation with Syria also influenced Eshkol's decision regarding Israel's Independence Day parade, to be held in Jerusalem. Washington claimed that a military parade would violate the Israeli-Jordanian armistice agreement. Eshkol took a middle position: IDF troops would march in the parade but without their tanks and artillery. Ben-Gurion lost no time in condemning this decision as "an unforgivable act of surrender," but Eshkol refused to alienate the Americans at a time when Israel might soon need them. "We are surrounded by a serious encirclement of hostility and that which does not succeed today could well succeed tomorrow or the day after," he told Mapai leaders on May 13. "We know that the Arab world is now divided... but things can always change."²⁰

Things were indeed about to change, unbeknownst to Eshkol and the estimated 200,000 spectators who converged on Jerusalem the next day. Not since the War of Independence would the leadership skills of Israel's prime minister be so thoroughly tested, nor would the country's survival be so deeply cast in doubt.

On May 14, while attending an Independence Day show in the Hebrew University stadium, Eshkol received word that vast numbers of Egyptian troops were marching into Sinai. The pretext was Soviet charges that Israeli forces had massed on the northern border in preparation for invading Syria. Though he knew these claims to be false, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser declared his intention to come to Syria's defense. Rabin immediately recommended the mobilization of all of Israel's reserves, but Eshkol preferred to proceed cautiously, and to put only the regular army on alert. Through diplomatic channels, meanwhile, Eshkol assured Nasser that Israel had no hostile intentions toward Syria or any Arab state, and no interest in war.²¹

Throughout the festivities the following day, reports of the Egyptian buildup streamed in. IDF intelligence concluded that Nasser's move was political in nature, and not meant as the prelude to a military offensive, but Eshkol was beginning to have doubts. Even without an all-out confrontation, Egypt's action could tie Israel's hands in its efforts to combat Palestinian terrorism. There was also the danger that Nasser would evict UN peacekeepers stationed in Sinai since the end of the Suez Campaign, or blockade the Straits of Tiran, cutting off Israel's vital oil shipments through Eilat. When asked by his wife Miriam why he seemed so distracted, Eshkol betrayed his distrust of the intelligence assessments: "Don't you realize there's going to be a war?"²²

And indeed, war increasingly seemed to be Egypt's objective. While Nasser clamored for "the final battle in Palestine," four Egyptian divisions rushed into Sinai. A relative handful of Israeli troops now faced 80,000 men, 550 tanks, and 1,000 guns. The Syrian army was also on the move, Damascus Radio declaring, "The war of liberation will not end except by

Israel's destruction." By May 16, the IDF had changed its initial assessment, and now warned of a combined Arab offensive. Consequently, Eshkol agreed to a limited call-up of 18,000 reservists. "It was clear to all of us that we had reached the point of no return," wrote Col. Yisrael Lior, Eshkol's military secretary. "The die had been cast."²³

Lior's intuition was confirmed on the night of May 16, when Egypt ousted the UN peacekeeping forces from Sinai, and the following afternoon, when Egyptian fighter planes penetrated Israeli airspace over the Dimona nuclear reactor, the country's most sensitive site. Thus began the ordeal that Israelis called "the waiting period," the weeks in which they no longer questioned whether war would break out, but only if Israel would strike first.²⁴

Responding to Nasser's provocations, Eshkol doubled the number of activated reserves and requested that the IDF beef up its armored forces in the south.²⁵ On his instructions, plans were drawn up for destroying Egyptian airfields in retaliation for any attack on Dimona, and for opening the straits by force. Yet, while preparing Israel militarily, Eshkol continued to explore diplomatic solutions to the crisis. He informed Nasser that Israeli troops had been mobilized for defensive purposes only and that, as long as Egypt refrained from interfering in the straits, Israel would not attack.²⁶

Eshkol also sought to elicit support from Israel's Western allies, and especially from the United States. On May 18, he wrote Johnson, "With a massive buildup on our southern frontier linked with a terrorist campaign from the north, and Soviet support for the governments responsible for the tension, there is surely an urgent need to reaffirm the American commitment to Israel's security." Eshkol was referring to a 1957 pledge in which Washington recognized Israel's right to resist any attempt to obstruct its shipping through Tiran.²⁷ Eshkol sent similar cables to French President Charles de Gaulle and British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, emphasizing that "an open expression of support for Israel's security and integrity... will be a most important diplomatic and psychological asset in

the delicate situation we now find ourselves in.” Finally, he invited the Soviet ambassador to Israel, Dmitri Chuvakhin, to tour the northern border and verify the absence of IDF concentrations.

None of these efforts succeeded in stemming the escalation of hostilities. Johnson, embroiled in Vietnam, advised Israel “to abstain from every step that would increase tension and violence in the area,” while the British and French chose not to respond at all. Chuvakhin rejected Eshkol’s invitation and instead accused Israel of plotting aggression on behalf of the CIA. But Eshkol was far from discouraged. While anxious to avoid war, he was equally committed to laying the groundwork for a successful outcome, if and when war should erupt.²⁸

In the meantime, the Egyptian buildup accelerated, as another two divisions entered Sinai along with bombers capable of decimating Israel’s cities. Cairo Radio taunted, “We are preparing Israel’s graveyard in the Gulf of Aqaba,” and its counterpart in Damascus proclaimed, “The withdrawal of the UN forces... means, ‘Make way, our forces are on their way to battle.’”²⁹

Eshkol had no illusions as to the nature of the threat. “The Egyptians intend to close the straits or to bomb the atomic reactor in Dimona,” he told the cabinet on May 21. “A general attack will follow... [in which] the first five minutes will be decisive. The question is: Who will strike the other’s airfields first?” He was also sensitive to the crippling cost of keeping the country mobilized, and of mounting calls for his resignation as defense minister, to be replaced by Ben-Gurion or Dayan. Yet he refused to sanction a pre-emptive strike until he had convinced the world—and America in particular—that there was no alternative. His message to the Knesset, therefore, was moderate: Israel would defend its right to free passage, “whatever the sacrifice,” but still expressed “reciprocal respect for the sovereignty, integrity, and international rights” of all Middle East nations.³⁰

Nasser’s response came at dawn on May 23, when Lior awakened Eshkol with news that the Egyptians had closed the Straits of Tiran. Israel

considered this a *casus belli*, and IDF generals were united in recommending an immediate military reply. “If Israel takes no action against the blockade, she will lose her credibility and... deterrent power,” insisted army intelligence chief Aharon Yariv. “The Arab states will interpret Israel’s weakness as an excellent opportunity to threaten her security and her very existence.” Ezer Weizman, IDF chief of operations, agreed: “We must strike the enemy now and swiftly... for if we do not, other forces will join him.”³¹

Eshkol, however, was also focused on the need to secure American backing for Israel’s stance, and to build a consensus in his government for military action. Unlike the general staff, however, the government was deeply split. Ministers Yigal Allon and Yisrael Galili, both of Ahdut Ha’avoda, sided with the IDF, while Education Minister Zalman Aran (Mapai) and Interior Minister Haim Moshe Shapira (National Religious Party) opposed any resort to force. Eshkol listened carefully to both sides of the argument before responding that he was unwilling to undertake a pre-emptive strike so long as the government was divided and diplomatic options remained. This did not mean, however, that Israel would sit passively. “We must show the Arabs that the Jews are not just standing here and bleating,” he told the cabinet. “If the Arabs bomb us—and it doesn’t matter what they bomb—we must respond rapidly and massively.” Eshkol’s answer was to continue mobilizing while investigating all diplomatic possibilities. One such possibility was an American plan, conveyed by Foreign Minister Abba Eban, for assembling an international maritime convoy to challenge the Egyptian blockade. Eshkol backed the idea, and asked the ministers to adopt a “business as usual” attitude while Eban explored it further abroad.³²

By overriding the advice of all his generals and many of his most influential ministers, Eshkol had displayed fortitude and independence. Nonetheless, the risks were multiplying, as Israeli intelligence received indications of concrete Egyptian plans to bomb essential Israeli facilities and to conquer the Negev on or around May 27. Equally disconcerting

were the initial reports of Eban's talks overseas. In France, de Gaulle withdrew his government's support for Israel's rights in the straits and threatened to cut off military supplies to the Jewish state if the IDF initiated hostilities. In Britain, Eban found Prime Minister Wilson more sympathetic, but reluctant to help Israel without express American backing. "The tension rose and rose and rose," Lior recounted in describing the events of May 23. "Messages poured in from around the world. Telephones rang incessantly.... The clock raced."³³

The following day, May 24, Eshkol continued to hold firm in pursuing diplomatic options and seeking a united cabinet, even as Arab war preparations intensified. "We will turn the Gulf of Aqaba into Israel's graveyard," Cairo Radio trumpeted. "For Israel, we hold death in store." The IDF general staff warned that "every delay is a gamble with Israel's survival," and predicted that ten thousand Israeli soldiers would die in the coming conflict. Weizman, filling in temporarily for Rabin, who had been incapacitated for a day by physical and emotional stress, lobbied Eshkol to sanction a pre-emptive strike. But divisions within the Israeli leadership persisted. Zalman Aran spoke of the Soviets' "cosmic power," of the "wall of steel and fire" that would decimate Tel Aviv if Israel shot first. Haim Moshe Shapira insisted that Ben-Gurion be returned to power.³⁴

Eshkol's resolve to continue pursuing a diplomatic solution was further tested later that day, when word came in of yet another penetration by Egyptian MiGs in the skies above Israel's nuclear reactor. Exasperated, Eshkol scolded Shapira, "Egyptian fighters are flying over Dimona and here we are arguing over Ben-Gurion!" The prime minister had begun to cast doubt on the maritime convoy scheme and instead broached the idea of breaking the blockade with an Israeli ship; if the Egyptians fired on the vessel, the IDF would counterattack in force. Nonetheless, he refrained from pursuing the plan until Eban had completed his most important talks of all, in Washington. The decision again disappointed those ministers in favor of attacking, but won the support of Yitzhak Rabin, who, having recovered from his breakdown, now supported Eshkol's approach.

Thus, Rabin stated, “I want it to be recorded for history that before acting, we did everything we could to find a diplomatic solution.”³⁵

As part of this effort, Rabin proposed that the Israeli government inform the Americans of Egypt’s impending attack and demand that they come out publicly in support of Israel. “We have reached the point of explosion,” the chief of staff explained. “If the Americans declare that any attack on us is tantamount to an attack on the United States, that could be our only reason to wait.” Even if the United States demurred, such a demand might help the Americans understand the desperation of Israel’s position, and increase the pressure on them to proffer more realistic assistance. Eshkol agreed, and instructed Eban to request such a declaration the minute he reached the White House.³⁶

Predictably, the president turned down the request, explaining that American troops could not come to Israel’s defense without the authorization of Congress. Yet Eshkol’s demarche did have at least two far-reaching consequences. Johnson promptly informed Moscow and Cairo of Israel’s claims, and warned them sternly against initiating hostilities. The result was an immediate halt to Egypt’s preparations for invading the Negev. Johnson also offered to expedite the creation of the international convoy, and to take “any and all measures in my power” to reopen the straits.³⁷ These developments formed the background for the next, fateful meeting of Israel’s government, on Saturday evening, May 27.

IV

The atmosphere surrounding the meeting was bleak and volatile. In the street outside the Prime Minister's Office, the mothers and wives of mobilized soldiers demanded Dayan's installment as defense minister, while inside, Haim Moshe Shapira threatened to resign unless a coalition of national unity were formed, including both the Rafi party and Menachem Begin's right-wing Gahal bloc. Cairo's official radio blared, "We challenge you, Eshkol, to try all your weapons. Put them to the test; they will spell Israel's death and annihilation." Rabin had just opened the discussion, declaring, "The noose is closing around our necks," when a bedraggled Eban arrived from the airport. He reported that Johnson was "firm as a rock" on Israel's right to free passage through the straits, but just as firmly opposed to an Israeli first strike. He quoted the president as warning, "Israel will not be alone unless it decides to go it alone." From every quarter, it seemed, Eshkol was assailed.

The hawks within the cabinet insisted on immediate military action, siding with Yigal Allon, who asked: "Does anyone around this table really think that we should let the enemy strike first just to prove to the world that they started it?" Joining with Allon were Agriculture Minister Haim Givati, who predicted that Israel was becoming little more than an American protectorate, and Yisrael Galili, a minister without portfolio, who warned of the "Emperor's New Clothes" factor as Nasser exposed Israel's unwillingness to fight. "Israel can be saved only by destroying Egypt's power," maintained Transportation Minister Moshe Carmel. "Anyone who says we can't stand alone is saying that we can't exist here."

Yet, for every official in favor of war, another rose to oppose it. "I have more confidence in the American promises than I do in the IDF's ability to break the Egyptian army," declared Haim Moshe Shapira. Zalman

Aran spoke of the benefits Israel would reap by trusting Lyndon Johnson, and Tourism Minister Moshe Kol warned of the hazards of alienating him. "It's hard to create a state but easy to lose one," observed Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir of Eshkol's Mapai party, and went on to express his doubt as to whether Israel could sustain as many casualties as the Arabs.

With the cabinet deadlocked, it was up to Eshkol to decide how to proceed. Earlier that day, he had responded enthusiastically to a suggestion by Soviet ambassador Chuvakhin that a resolution to the crisis was still negotiable. Johnson's convoy idea appeared to be offering that solution, but Eshkol doubted whether the Americans could implement it and distrusted any initiative that might limit Israel's ability to deal with other threats, such as Palestinian terror. In electing to wait, Eshkol had to weigh the loss of Israel's deterrent capability against the time he would gain to forge a government consensus in favor of action, to further demonstrate Israel's non-belligerency, and to prepare the IDF for possible war. The danger of defying the world's only sympathetic superpower had to be taken into account, as did what Eshkol called "the need to show Johnson we're the good guys." After weighing the costs, Eshkol indicated that his own position was that Israel should strike pre-emptively. Nonetheless, he believed that a decision of such magnitude should only be made clear-headedly, and at 4:00 A.M., Eshkol called a recess. "We must decide in whose hands we will place this generation," he exhorted his ministers, "in fate's, America's, or Chuvakhin's."³⁸

No sooner had the ministers dispersed than two top-secret telegrams arrived from Washington, both of which demanded that additional time be given for diplomacy. The first cable reconfirmed Johnson's commitment to the convoy plan and to restoring free passage through the straits, while the second one contained a caveat: "It is essential that Israel not take any pre-emptive military action and thereby make itself responsible for the initiation of hostilities." Johnson also wrote of the danger of direct

Soviet intervention in the Middle East. “Pre-emptive action by Israel would make it impossible for the friends of Israel to stand at your side.”³⁹

These communications served to tilt the balance in the cabinet when it reconvened on Sunday afternoon. Instead of the expected majority in favor of striking first, the ministers were now evenly divided, nine against nine. As prime minister, Eshkol could cast an additional, tie-breaking ballot, but chose not to exercise his right. His decision was guided in part by the threat of certain ministers—Abba Eban and Haim Moshe Shapira—to resign if the government voted for war, but also by Eshkol’s conviction that the country could not take such a weighty step on the strength of a one-vote margin.⁴⁰ Once the fighting began, he believed, unity would be essential to Israel’s survival.

With “the waiting period” again extended, Eshkol resolved to cement Israel’s position with the Americans by affording Johnson additional time to launch the international convoy. In the interim, Israel would redouble its efforts to generate international sympathy, raise funds, and purchase arms. Adjourning, the government issued a terse communique: “Israel views the closure of the Straits of Tiran as an act of belligerency and will defend itself against it at the appropriate time, exercising its rights to self-defense as all states have.”⁴¹

The ministers dispersed, but Eshkol’s “longest night,” as Col. Lior called it, had scarcely begun. The government’s decision left Eshkol in the unenviable position of having to explain to a frightened Israeli public, anxious for action, that the government would continue pursuing diplomacy. Thus, from the Prime Minister’s Office he headed to the studios of Israel Radio to deliver a live address. The text he received, however, was crumpled and crisscrossed with editing. Never a great speechmaker, Eshkol stuttered, creating an impression of uncertainty. Israelis were also shocked to learn that their security was to be placed in the hands of a foreign power. “It’s amazing how a people who suffered a Holocaust is willing to believe and endanger itself once again,” wrote Ze’ev Schiff, columnist for

the daily *Ha'aretz*. Soldiers huddled around transistor radios in the Negev were said to have burst into tears.⁴²

The abortive speech would have been unnerving for any leader, much less one under extreme duress, yet an even more daunting task awaited Eshkol at IDF headquarters. There he would have to explain to the general staff why the time had not yet arrived for military action. For nearly two weeks, they had been intensively preparing for war, and were confident that the green light would be given. But Eshkol had come to disappoint them: "It is not politically, diplomatically, and perhaps even morally logical to start a war," Eshkol opened. "We now have to restrain ourselves and to maintain our forces for a week or two or even longer." He outlined the convoy plan, emphasizing America's commitment to breaking the Egyptian blockade, and warned of the vast losses—financial, material, human—that Israel might suffer in war. "I understand you commanders are discontented, but maturity dictates that we stand up to this test."

The officers waited for Eshkol to finish and then they pounced. "In two weeks the straits will still be closed and we will be in a worse situation," charged Maj.-Gen. Yeshayahu "Shaika" Gavish, chief of the Southern Command. "More of our men will die." His counterpart at Central Command, Maj.-Gen. Uzi Narkiss, concurred: "The problem lies not with us but with the younger generation, who will never understand why the IDF did not attack." Divisional commander Avraham Yoffe asserted that "The IDF was created to defend the state, but the government is not letting the army carry out its mission—a mission that the people want." Maj.-Gen. Aharon Yariv, chief of intelligence, was no less forceful: "Israel cannot expect anybody else to do its dirty work. We alone can break the stranglehold tightening around us." The most adamant remarks, however, were delivered by another front-line general, Ariel Sharon, who declared that "The people of Israel are ready to wage a just war, to fight, and to pay the price. The question isn't free passage, but the existence of the people of Israel."

Eshkol absorbed these blows for over an hour, and held his ground in defending the line that his government had taken. He explained that the IDF had not been created for waging wars of choice, and that the mere presence of the Egyptian army in Sinai was insufficient grounds for attacking pre-emptively. “Deterrence means having patience,” he insisted, “endurance.”⁴³

Some Israeli historians would later claim that the generals had staged a “putsch” against Eshkol, crossing the sometimes fluid line between the country’s civilian and military echelons.⁴⁴ No evidence whatsoever exists to support this theory, however. On the contrary, the meeting at IDF headquarters illustrated the strength of Eshkol’s leadership, and of Israeli democracy: The officers felt unconstrained in expressing their opposition to the government’s policy, while the head of that government, standing alone, overrode them. Yet upholding the rule of law and defending the government’s decision would not be without cost for Eshkol.

V

“As long as Eshkol is in office we will plummet into the abyss,” Ben-Gurion inscribed in his diary the next morning. That day’s edition of *Ha’aretz* seemed to concur: “The government in its present composition cannot lead the nation in its time of danger.” Even Eshkol’s allies were deserting him. Citizens for Eshkol, a public action group formed during the 1965 elections, called for the creation of a national unity government that would include Dayan and Ben-Gurion. Behind the scenes, Mapai secretary Golda Meir negotiated feverishly with Rafi’s Shimon Peres, proposing various solutions such as Dayan’s appointment as deputy prime minister or as chief of the Southern Command. Menachem Begin wanted to create a special war cabinet headed by Ben-Gurion, in which

Eshkol would serve as a deputy. Dayan rejected these ideas—he would accept nothing less than Defense—but Eshkol proved equally stubborn. “These two horses cannot be hitched to the same wagon,” was his reaction to sharing power with Ben-Gurion. “Let me get this straight,” he asked Haim Moshe Shapira. “You want Dayan and you *don’t* want war?”⁴⁵

As political pressures mounted within Israel, the Arab threat encircling it escalated. From across North Africa to the Persian Gulf, Arab brigades were converging on the front—a combined force of 900 combat aircraft, over 5,000 tanks, and half a million men. Arab unity reached its peak on May 30, when King Hussein of Jordan signed a mutual defense pact with his former nemesis, Nasser, and placed his troops under Egyptian command. “Our goal is clear—to wipe Israel off the face of the map,” proclaimed Iraqi President Abdel Rahman Muhammad Aref. “We shall, God willing, meet in Tel Aviv and Haifa.”⁴⁶ The offensive ring around Israel was complete. Not just the army but the entire populace now mobilized, giving blood and filling sandbags. Medical supplies were stockpiled, especially antidotes for poison gas, and calls went out for Jewish volunteers from abroad. Plans were drafted for evacuating thousands of Israeli children to Europe.⁴⁷

The growing sense of a second Holocaust about to befall the Jewish people compounded the pressures on Eshkol to act quickly and decisively. Caricatures appearing in the daily *Ma’ariv* depicted a tank-driving Nasser crushing Eshkol in his bed, and King Hussein jetting over him en route to Cairo. Ezer Weizman stormed into the prime minister’s office, threw his general’s insignia onto the desk, and shouted, “The state is being destroyed, Eshkol. Why waste your time with Moshe Dayan? Give the order and we will win!” before storming out again.⁴⁸

A shrewd politician, Eshkol understood that he could delay no further, and that he had to broaden the government, even at the price of turning over the Defense Ministry to his political adversary, Dayan. Thus, on June 1, Eshkol secured the cabinet’s unanimous backing for the proposal that Dayan become defense minister in a national unity

government. Together with Gahal's 26 seats and Rafi's 10, the coalition now accounted for 111 out of the 120 seats in the Knesset, reflecting an unprecedented display of national consensus.

To make sure that he would continue setting policy on crucial defense matters, however, Eshkol extracted from Dayan a promise not to approve operations beyond the general war plan sanctioned by the cabinet, and not to bomb Arab cities unless Israeli cities were bombed first. As a further check on Dayan's powers, Eshkol enlisted Yigael Yadin, the IDF's second chief of staff, as his special adviser on defense.⁴⁹

Though Eshkol had conceded some control over how the war was to be waged, he retained authority over the more fundamental question of when the war would start. Dayan wanted to attack at once, but the prime minister was still determined to exhaust every diplomatic alternative in order to maximize American sympathy with Israel's position. He again wrote Johnson, recalling the president's promise to use "any and all measures" to open the straits, and advising him that Israelis were "approaching a point at which counsels of restraint would lack any moral or logical basis." The United States, he enjoined, could no longer postpone measures to restore the *status quo ante* in Sinai, and to end the Tiran blockade.⁵⁰

Mere letter-writing could no longer suffice, though, and Eshkol authorized two clandestine initiatives. In the first, Efraim "Eppy" Evron, who was *charge d'affaires* at Israel's Washington embassy and had close contacts in the White House, would discreetly raise Eshkol's idea of sending an Israeli vessel through the straits. At the same time, Eshkol dispatched to Washington the chief of the Mossad intelligence agency, Meir Amit, to sound out America's attitude toward pre-emption.

Though Eshkol's letter produced no major shift in American policy—Johnson replied that he had not pledged to use "any and all measures" to reopen the straits, but only measures within his constitutional powers—the secret initiatives bore fruit. National Security Adviser Walter Rostow expressed muted interest in Evron's proposal, and agreed to pass it on to

the president.⁵¹ Amit was received warmly by CIA director Richard Helms and Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, both of whom listened to Amit's explanation of why Israel had to strike first and immediately, and raised no objections. "I read you loud and clear," replied McNamara.⁵²

The impression of growing American support for pre-emption was further reinforced by America's UN ambassador Arthur Goldberg, a committed Zionist and one of Johnson's closest Jewish advisers, who quietly informed the Israelis that the president knew they had no choice and would have to defend themselves. The message was reiterated by another Jewish friend of Johnson, Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas. "Eshkol and Eban did a great service to Israel by giving the U.S. a chance to explore options other than Israeli force," he told Evron on June 1. "If they had not done so, it would have been difficult to secure the president's sympathy."⁵³

On the other hand, Israeli ambassador Avraham Harman reported from Washington that the administration still opposed any resort to force, and had invited Egyptian Vice President Zakhariyya Muhieddin for talks on resolving the crisis. In a further effort to clarify America's position, Eshkol ordered IDF intelligence to monitor the American media for signs of support for pre-emption. "What do we have to do so that they [the Americans] won't say, 'But you promised to wait?'" he asked Dayan on June 2. The answer would come that night as both Harman and Amit returned to Jerusalem.⁵⁴

Lior, who recorded the meeting, recalled the tension was "unbearable" as, at midnight, Amit and Harman entered. Their message was uniform: The United States could not mount the convoy operation, nor would it cooperate with Israel militarily. But, Amit added, "It is my impression that the Americans will give their blessing to any action that succeeds in sticking it to Nasser."⁵⁵

Even so, Eshkol was not yet convinced that Israel had secured all the political advantages of waiting. At a joint meeting of government ministers and the general staff the following morning, June 3, he again counseled

restraint. The government remained divided, with Allon and Galili again leading the faction in favor of attacking, and Shapira and Aran heading the opposition. Members of the general staff were also present, and after soberly describing their battle plans, they assailed the government's inaction. "Nasser is getting stronger, and we just sit there and do nothing," Yoffe protested. Maj.-Gen. Matti Peled followed, charging that "The enemy is digging in while our economy weakens, and all for a purpose that no one has yet explained." As Lior recalled it, the officers staged a "war of attrition" against the government: "They went on pounding the ministers' heads...[trying] to bring them to their knees."

Eshkol, however, was undeterred. "We will still need Johnson's help and support," he insisted. "I hope we won't need it during the fighting, but we shall certainly need it if we are victorious, in order to protect our gains. I want to make it clear to the president, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that we have not misled him; that we've given the necessary time for any political action designed to prevent the war. Two days more or less will not sway the outcome." After further debate, Eshkol endorsed a proposal, put forth by Dayan, that the government reconvene in twenty-four hours to make a final decision.⁵⁶

Those hours only complicated Israel's position, seemingly limiting its ability to strike first. First came a personal letter to Eshkol from Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin, warning that "If the Israeli government insists on taking upon itself the responsibility for the outbreak of armed confrontation, then it will pay the full price of such an action." Next, France announced that it would suspend all arms shipments to the Middle East.⁵⁷ Finally, just as the government was reconvening, another cable arrived from Johnson. The contents were again ambiguous: A reaffirmation of America's commitment to Israel's security, coupled with a reiteration of the declaration that "Israel will not be alone unless it decides to go it alone." The president concluded, "I must emphasize the necessity for Israel not to make itself responsible for the initiation of hostilities... We cannot imagine that it will make this decision."⁵⁸

But events along Israel's borders made it impossible to continue waiting, as Yariv told the cabinet of the thousands of troops, tanks, and planes now amassed on Israel's borders. Foreign Minister Eban, who had been among those most opposed to a pre-emptive strike, admitted that there was no longer hope of a diplomatic solution and that military action was now necessary. Haim Moshe Shapira continued to raise objections, quoting Ben-Gurion to the effect that Israel could never go to war without an ally among the great powers. Yet this argument had lost its hold on his colleagues, and Dayan snapped: "Then let Ben-Gurion go and find us an ally. I'm not sure we'll still be alive." Yigal Allon, counseling against further delays, predicted that "The world will condemn us, but we will survive."

Finally, Eshkol spoke. For over two weeks he had played for time, resisted immense pressures, suffered unremitting scorn. Yet now he could unreservedly say that Israel had explored every option to the fullest, and that it had no choice but to go to war. That knowledge had created a consensus within the government supporting action, and would have a tremendous impact on American leaders who would soon have to decide whether or not to oppose Israel's military efforts. Eshkol might have summarized the painful but necessary process endured by Israel, and praised his own temperance. Instead, he said simply, "I'm convinced that today we must give the order to the IDF to choose the time and manner in which to act."⁵⁹

The discussion, one of the most momentous in Israel's history, was over. A proposal was presented—"It is therefore decided to launch a military strike aimed at liberating Israel from encirclement and preventing the impending assault by the united Arab armies"—and put to a vote. Twelve ministers voted in favor, and only two, from the left-wing Mapam party, opposed it. These two subsequently changed their positions, providing Eshkol with the unity he had striven for, his prerequisite for embarking on war.⁶⁰

VI

The war commenced at 7:30 A.M. the next morning, June 5, when Israeli planes destroyed much of Egypt's air force on the ground. Thereafter, Israeli tanks and infantry also broke through Egyptian defenses in Sinai and sowed panic in the ranks of the Egyptian army. Eshkol's efforts to modernize the army and promote its most talented commanders, and his commitment to expanding Israel's intelligence capabilities, had all proved invaluable. Moreover, lulled into complacency by the lengthy "waiting period," Arab military leaders had let down their guard. The IDF, by contrast, had achieved a maximum state of readiness. "The army was bolted and locked," recalled Shlomo Merom, a senior intelligence officer. "We had only to pull the trigger."⁶¹ Though desperate battles were yet to be fought, the outcome of the war was largely determined in its opening hours.

Eshkol spent those hours writing letters to Western leaders asking for their support in the conflict, and directing diplomatic efforts to delay UN attempts to stem the Israeli advance.⁶² Fully engaged on the diplomatic front, Eshkol left the tactical management of the war largely to Rabin and Dayan. Yet there were two exceptions to this rule, both of them critical to Israel's future, both demanding Eshkol's singular brand of leadership.

The first exception was Jerusalem. With the outbreak of fighting, Eshkol secretly warned Hussein not to join the war. Desperate to avoid opening a second front, the Israelis remained passive when Jordan's guns started bombarding western Jerusalem, while Jordanian jets strafed civilian targets in Netanya and the southern Galilee. But then the Jordanians began shelling Israeli airfields and advancing on the ground in Jerusalem. Eshkol supported the decision to send Israeli forces into the West Bank to silence the artillery, but when Begin and Allon proposed that the IDF

capture eastern Jerusalem, the prime minister balked. *Sis agedank*, Eshkol replied sarcastically in Yiddish, slapping a hand to his forehead—“There’s an idea.”

As a Jew from an observant background, and a former Hagana official who remembered the failed efforts to capture the Old City in 1948, Eshkol wanted nothing more than to reunify Jerusalem. As a statesman, however, he feared the censure Israel might incur from Western countries if it occupied Christian holy places. “We have to weigh the diplomatic ramifications of conquering the Old City,” he told a select group of ministers meeting on the first night of the war. “Even if we take the West Bank and the Old City, we will eventually be forced to leave them.” The government was again split between those members pressing for immediate action and those resisting it, among them Dayan, who warned of impairing Israel’s relations with Christian countries and the Vatican. Eshkol once more advised patience. He drafted a compromise formula reflecting a consensus of opinion, which was unanimously accepted by the cabinet: “In view of the situation created in Jerusalem by the Jordanian bombardment, and after warnings were sent to Hussein, an opportunity has perhaps been created to capture the Old City.”⁶³

The situation in Jerusalem changed radically over the next day, however, as Israeli forces succeeded in routing the Jordanians and virtually encircling the Old City. With the army within reach of the Temple Mount, Judaism’s holiest site, could the government still justify ordering it to halt? Eshkol no longer thought so. He was also deeply angered and disappointed by Hussein, who, after first calling on his troops to cease fire, was again exhorting them to battle. Eshkol now proposed that Israel capture the Old City and declare its respect for all religious shrines. But Dayan continued to oppose the move—and so, now, did the Americans.

Since the first day of fighting, the United States had quietly supported Israel’s efforts to postpone a UN-declared cease-fire and thereby afford the IDF time to complete its victory in the south. In this way, America

acknowledged the fact that Israel had done everything possible to avert a war with Nasser, and deserved the opportunity to remove the Egyptian threat forcibly. The eastern front, however, presented difficulties for Washington, which considered Hussein's regime a cornerstone of Western influence in the region. Though it refrained from openly criticizing Israeli operations in the West Bank and Jerusalem, the Johnson administration secretly signaled its concern. Goldberg told Gideon Rafael, Israel's ambassador to the UN, that the fall of Jordan would embroil Israel in "serious international complications."⁶⁴

"Nu? So what do we say to Hussein?" Eshkol rhetorically asked a gathering of high-ranking ministers and advisers at dawn on June 7. Eban recommended that Israel accept the cease-fire in the hope that the Arabs would soon violate it. Dayan was against sending any reply. Eshkol listened to these suggestions, and then responded with a seemingly innocuous question: "Maybe we'll just ask him who's the boss in Jordan?" Eshkol had in fact made up his mind what to say to Hussein, and the message was daring. Israel would accept the cease-fire, but only if Hussein would reclaim command of his troops, guarantee a cease-fire, and agree to peace talks. "That'll be the king's death," observed Yigal Allon, and indeed the chances of receiving a positive answer were slight. But if Hussein accepted Israel's terms—for which the United States and Britain served as the intermediaries—Eshkol would have no choice but to refrain from entering the Old City.⁶⁵ The realization of a two-thousand-year-old dream would again be delayed indefinitely.

As in "the waiting period" preceding the war, Eshkol pursued a brinkmanship policy, exhausting all diplomatic options in order to mollify Washington and his opponents at home, all the while preparing to act militarily. Now, once again, his gamble paid off. Hussein never replied to Israel's ultimatum. The Americans were again convinced that Israel had taken every reasonable step to prevent further bloodshed in Jerusalem, as were skeptics within Eshkol's cabinet. At 9:30 A.M., the cabinet

sanctioned the capture of the Old City. Israeli paratroopers rushed through the Lions' Gate and soon after reported, "The Temple Mount is in our hands."

Eshkol had played a decisive role in the Jerusalem campaign, navigating deftly around Dayan and other ministers opposed to entering the Old City, and correctly assessing Israel's military and diplomatic latitude. He would fulfill a similar part in another struggle, no less crucial, over the Golan Heights.

Here, too, his background enabled him to understand the full implications of all sides of the issue. Eshkol the farmer sympathized with the northern settlements' suffering under Syrian shellfire, and shared their aspiration to capture the Banias springs, a Jordan River source. Lior recalled how Eshkol "in every consultation and every discussion... would ask three or four times, 'What's happening up north? What about the Banias?'" His concern rose in tandem with Syria's aggression. On the first day of the war, Syrian jets attacked targets in the Galilee, and Syrian gunners on the Golan rained thousands of shells onto Israeli civilians below. At dawn the following day, Syrian tanks and infantry launched an abortive assault on Kibbutz Dan.⁶⁶

Eshkol the statesman, however, recognized the dangers in responding to this aggression. In a cable dated June 7, Kosygin warned him: "Should Israel not follow the voice of reason, and should it not stop the bloodbath, it will bear the responsibility for the outbreak of war and for all its possible results." The next morning, Chuvakhin threatened to sever relations with Israel—or worse. "If Israelis become drunk with success and pursue their aggression further, the future of this little country will be a very sad one indeed," he said.⁶⁷ By attacking Syria, Israel risked clashing militarily with Moscow.

Eshkol's consideration of the pros and cons of the situation was reflected in the cabinet's deliberations, conducted on June 8. Once again it was Allon, Galili, and Begin pressing for immediate retribution against Syria, and Aran and Shapira opposing. Dayan objected as well, citing the

threat of Soviet intervention. Eshkol could not ignore that threat, particularly in view of the recent communications from Moscow. "I know that this issue could entangle us with Russia," Eshkol admitted to the ministers. He proposed that the cabinet resolve "to postpone for one to two days further decision regarding operations on the Syrian heights, and to order the chief of staff to submit an operations plan for approval by the Defense Committee." During these two days, Eshkol cautioned, Israel should refrain from provoking the Syrians.⁶⁸

The statesman Eshkol had taken precedence over the farmer, but only temporarily. Syria's shelling of the north intensified, and embattled residents of the area lobbied the government for help. "We're being shelled nonstop!" one of them, Haim Ber, hollered into Eshkol's telephone. "We demand that the government save us from this nightmare." Next, in a meeting with Northern Commander Maj.-Gen. David Elazar, Eshkol heard that beyond Syria's front-line defenses, the road to Damascus was open. "I can get up there today, capture positions and advance. Of course we'll have casualties, but it won't be a slaughter. We can do it."

That night, Eshkol reconvened his senior ministers for the purpose of gaining approval for seizing at least part of the Golan. To this end, he invited Ya'akov Eshkoli, a representative of the Galilee settlements, to address the committee. "If the State of Israel is incapable of defending us, we should be told that outright... and evacuate our homes," he insisted. Rabin confirmed that the army had the requisite forces to take the heights, and Allon asserted that he "prefer[red] the Syrian ridge without the Soviets to the Syrians remaining on that ridge and our retaining our ties with the Soviets." These arguments succeeded in changing the mind of at least one minister, Zalman Aran, who observed that "for four thousand years we have spoken about the sacrifice of Isaac. In those settlements, men, women, and children are threatened with sacrifice. The situation is insufferable."

Several ministers still objected to a counteroffensive, however, and none more strenuously than Dayan. He listed the reasons why Israel

could not attack—Northern Command was undermanned, the air force exhausted, the Syrians determined to fight—and then landed a bombshell of his own. “I’d rather move the settlements ten or twenty miles from the Syrian artillery than get caught up in a third front leading to a clash with the Soviets.... Thousands of Arabs were relocated as a result of this war; we can relocate several dozen Israelis.” Eshkol bristled at the remark. “There could be no greater victory for the Syrians,” he retorted. He suggested that the cabinet authorize Dayan, Rabin, and him to approve an operation against Syria when they saw fit. “It’d be a pity if the Syrians got off scot-free.”⁶⁹

Eshkol went home that night still determined to advance on the Golan, but believing that action on the northern front would not take place for least another twenty-four hours. Just after midnight, however, Dayan received information that the fighting had finished on both the Egyptian and Jordanian fronts, that Syria was about to accept the cease-fire, and that enemy forces on the Golan had begun to crumble. Four hours later, feeling the opportunity slipping through Israel’s fingers, Dayan telephoned Elazar and gave him the order to attack.

Word of Dayan’s *volte-face* reached Eshkol indirectly, in a message sent by the Defense Ministry to Lior. Eshkol was furious at what he regarded as a violation of democratic norms. But now another dilemma confronted him: Either allow Dayan’s order to stand or forfeit the opportunity to settle accounts with Syria. “There’s no point in canceling the order now,” he concluded. “If he [Dayan] thinks he can do whatever he wants, let him do it.”⁷⁰ Thus, once Dayan had accepted Eshkol’s position in favor of capturing the Golan Heights, Eshkol decided that he would back his defense minister’s move against any opposition that it might meet.

Many ministers, however, were incensed by Dayan’s move. At 8:00 P.M. on June 9, as IDF troops completed a day of bitter combat and gained a substantial foothold on the heights, the ministers met in judgment on Dayan. “Why are we now going to violate the cease-fire in front

of the whole world?" asked Shapira. Yisrael Barzilai, the health minister from Mapam, insisted that "this forum should have reconvened in the middle of the night and made a proper decision." Compelled to justify his actions, Dayan implied that he had first consulted Eshkol, saying that "these factors enabled us to think that perhaps we had the ability to change the international border between us and Syria."

If Eshkol had been a vengeful man, if he had placed personal pride over national interests, he might have isolated Dayan. Instead, he merely remarked, "I cannot say that I was asked," and then continued: "But can we stop now that we are in the middle of the operation?" Eshkol provided the answer: "The Syrians cannot be allowed to parade in victory. Israel cannot have overturned all the Arab countries and not Syria." Persuaded by Eshkol's reasoning, the ministers resolved to allow the campaign to continue until the following morning. "If the people at the front feel they can finish the task tonight and tomorrow—let them," said Eshkol. "In any case we will be condemned in the UN."⁷¹

Eshkol had once again brought a divided government to agreement at a critical time. But more formidable obstacles lay ahead. The Kremlin now pledged to "render assistance" to the Syrians "in order to repel the [Israeli] aggression and defend their national independence." The United States, which had rushed warships into the eastern Mediterranean to discourage Soviet intervention, nevertheless began to express disapproval of Israel's action. Secretary of State Dean Rusk wrote to Eshkol that he was "deeply disturbed" by the Golan assault, while at the UN, Goldberg took Rafael aside and told him, "The United States government does not want the war to end as the result of a Soviet ultimatum. This would be disastrous for the future not only of Israel, but of us all." America's ability to deter Soviet intervention was undermined, Washington warned, by Israeli violations of the cease-fire.⁷²

The gravity of these messages was not lost on Eshkol. Now, in addition to resistance within the cabinet, he had also to overcome Washington's objections and, possibly, armed interference from Moscow. The

situation worsened at 10:00 A.M. on June 10, when Chuvakhin stormed into Israel's Foreign Ministry and announced the severance of Moscow's diplomatic relations with Israel. Nine other Communist bloc countries quickly followed suit. The move was accompanied by yet another threat from Kosygin: "If Israel does not cease its action immediately, the USSR, together with other peace-loving nations, will take sanctions, with all the implications thereof."⁷³

To enable the IDF to complete the capture of the Golan, Eshkol urged that it do its work more swiftly. "We must finish quickly," Eshkol implored Dayan and Elazar when he met them that morning. "We're under heavy pressure from the UN." At the same time, however, he employed a brinkmanship strategy, and did not call off the IDF until it had completed the full conquest of the heights at 6:00 P.M. With the cease-fire in place, the Americans undertook to coordinate their postwar policy with Israel while the Soviet threat evaporated. The Six Day War, as it came to be known in Israel and most of the world, was over.⁷⁴

VII

In contrast to Moshe Dayan and Yitzhak Rabin, who became cultural icons after June 1967, Levi Eshkol was never lionized. Nonetheless, with the perspective of three and a half decades, it is now possible to recognize his crucial contributions to victory.

Eshkol built the army that won the war, strengthened Israel's intelligence capabilities, and retained the services of its most talented generals. Despite the extreme tensions of "the waiting period," he preserved and even expanded his coalition, all the while working patiently to reach a consensus among his diversely minded ministers. Most importantly, by thoroughly exploring all diplomatic alternatives, Eshkol gained sympathy

abroad and particularly in the United States. Once war broke out, the Johnson administration cooperated with Israel in postponing a UN cease-fire, and effectively checked Soviet attempts to intervene. Later, in November 1967, the U.S. served as the prime architect of UN Resolution 242, which stipulated that Israel would not have to withdraw from captured territories without an Arab commitment to peace. Through Eshkol's efforts, a repeat of Israel's 1956 trauma was averted.

Eshkol's policies also had a pivotal impact on the course of the war. Arab leaders were deceived into believing that Israel would never attack, leaving their own armies exposed to a surprise assault. The IDF, meanwhile, completed its mobilization, practiced offensives, and primed itself for battle. "We were all a bunch of war-horses who never understood Eshkol," Rehavam Ze'evi, the IDF deputy chief of operations during the war, remembered. "In retrospect, I can see that he was right. Thanks to his wisdom, the army was totally trained for war. That was Eshkol's blessing. He proved himself."⁷⁵

Eshkol also deserves credit for his role in the historic battles for Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. In both cases, he acted in the same fashion that he had during "the waiting period," exploring diplomatic alternatives while readying the army to act, building a consensus before resorting, finally, to force. And once force was employed, Eshkol resisted tremendous pressure in order to ensure that the army had time to attain its objectives.

For Eshkol, Israel's objectives in the Six Day War were clear. Thus, during a visit to Johnson's Texas ranch in January 1968, he told the president:

I have no sense of boastful triumph, nor have I entered the struggle for peace in the role of victor. My feeling is one of relief that we were saved from disaster in June, and for this I thank God. All my thoughts now are turned toward achieving peace with our neighbors—a peace of honor between equals.⁷⁶

Eshkol was a man not only of war but ultimately of peace, a democrat and a patriot. He was all of these things, but was he a leader? Certainly, he was not a leader in the Weberian sense, charismatic and articulate, like Ben-Gurion or Begin. Eshkol, by contrast, led less by allure and inspiration than by candor and common sense, by patience and coalition-building. Steeped in Jewish values and culture, he was moreover a distinctly Jewish leader, exhibiting qualities—wisdom, humility, forbearance—that Judaism traditionally associates with effective leadership.⁷⁷ Convinced of the soundness of his policies, Eshkol was able to withstand overwhelming opposition, to temporize and strike compromises, while never losing sight of his objective. He knew when to hold tight and when to give in, to go to the brink but not beyond it. If triumph over adversity is the real test of leadership, then Eshkol truly excelled.

Many leaders, scorned by their contemporaries, are appreciated only in retrospect, and Eshkol was no exception. A year after his meeting with Johnson, Levi Eshkol was dead, the victim of heart failure caused—Lior believed—by the stresses of the Six Day War. Stunned, the same newspapers that once excoriated him suddenly gushed with his praise. *Ha'aretz* lauded his “ability to run the state with a staff of refinement rather than the spear of wrath,” and his “roots as a Jew, an Israeli, and a man experienced in the ways of life far beyond politics.” Wrote *Ma'ariv*, “Perhaps only Eshkol, whose personality combined audacity, obstinacy, and weakness, could have weathered the most serious crisis Israel has ever faced.”⁷⁸

Since then, the name of Eshkol has been perpetuated in a number of projects associated with his life—in Eshkol Lake (the national water carrier's largest reservoir), in the Eshkol Agricultural Belt in southern Israel, and in the Ramat Eshkol neighborhood of Jerusalem. Yet the legacy of the man who contributed inestimably to the country's birth, growth, and security remains unfamiliar to many Israelis, and especially those born after his death.

Not for long, however, for with declassification of documents from 1967, Eshkol's accomplishments can at last be revealed and appreciated.

Contrary to his previous image as vacillating and inconsequential, Eshkol can now be seen as consistent throughout, and integral to Israel's victory in the Six Day War. His unique combination of patience, foresight, and strength made him the right leader to guide Israel successfully through one of the most tumultuous episodes in its history. Today, as the country confronts challenges no less daunting, the record of that leadership is especially pertinent.

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Notes

1. Parts of this article have been adapted from my book *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Oxford, 2002).

2. There is one non-academic biography of Eshkol in English, and one in Hebrew: Terence Prittie, *Eshkol: The Man and the Nation* (New York: Pitman, 1969); and Yosef Shapira, *Levi Eshkol* (Ramat Gan: Masada, 1969). [Hebrew] One particularly noteworthy essay providing a reassessment of Eshkol's leadership is Yehiam Weitz, "'The Man of Consensus': Levi Eshkol and His Era," in Tzvi Tzameret and Chana Yablonka, eds., *The Second Decade: 1958-1968* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, 2000), pp. 167-192. [Hebrew]

3. Eyal Naveh, *The Twentieth Century: On the Brink of Tomorrow* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Books, 1999) [Hebrew]; Eliezer Dumka, *The World and the Jews in Recent Generations* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar, 1998). [Hebrew]

4. Robert Slater, *Rabin of Israel, A Biography* (London: Robson, 1993), p. 150.

5. Yitzhak Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs* (Berkeley: University of California, 1996), pp. 93-94.

6. Levi Eshkol website, research.haifa.ac.il/~eshkol/roots.html.

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7. Eshkol website, research.haifa.ac.il/~eshkol.
8. S.N. Eisenstadt, *Israeli Society* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1970), pp. 26-33. [Hebrew] General information on Eshkol's early years and achievements can be found at the following websites: www.us-israel.org/jsource/biography/eshkol.html; www.jajz-ed.org.il/100/people/bios/eshkol.html; www.jafi.org.il/treasurer/bios/eshkol.htm; and www.israel.org/mfa/go.asp?MFAH00fr0.
9. Rabin quote from Rabin, *Memoirs*, p. 61; Ezer Weizman, *On Eagles' Wings: The Personal Story of the Leading Commander of the Israeli Air Force* (New York: Macmillan, 1976), pp. 190-191. For further comments on Eshkol's personality, see Prittie, *Eshkol*, pp. 105, 183; Eitan Haber, *Today War Will Break Out* (Tel Aviv: Yedi'ot Aharonot, 1987), pp. 140-142 [Hebrew]; National Archives of Canada (hereafter "NAC"), RG 25, Box 10082: 20-ISR-9: Visit of Prime Minister Eshkol to Canada, January 15-26, 1968; Eliav quote from the Eshkol website, research.haifa.ac.il/~eshkol/lova.html.
10. On the abortive spy operation in Egypt, see Michael B. Oren, *The Origins of the Second Arab-Israeli War: Egypt, Israel, and the Great Powers, 1952-1956* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), pp. 52-54, 106-108.
11. Eshkol initially held Ben-Gurion's assumption as well, viewing his government as a caretaker pending Ben-Gurion's return. But a generation of younger leaders saw in Eshkol the opportunity to break Ben-Gurion's monopoly over Mapai politics, and determined to keep him in the Prime Minister's Office. As Eshkol began to register important political achievements both within Israel and abroad, he came to share their view.
12. Sarid quote from Eshkol website, research.haifa.ac.il/~eshkol/sarid.html. Regarding Eshkol's conciliatory policy towards the opposition, see Weitz, "Man of Consensus," p. 179.
13. Eshkol quote from www.israel-mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0dxm0. Eshkol's peace plan is posted on www.us-israel.org/jsource/Peace/eshpeace.html.
14. The Johnson-Eshkol exchange is reproduced in *The Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968; Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1964-1967* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2000), vol. xviii, pp. 152-155. See also I.L. Kenen, *Israel's Defense Line: Her Friends and Foes in Washington* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1981), p. 173; and United States National Archives (hereafter "USNA"), Middle East Crisis Files, 1967, Lot File 68D135, Box 1: United States Statements on Israel: Johnson Statements, June 1, 1964.
15. The impact of the Skyhawk sale was mainly symbolic at first; the planes were delivered only in December 1967, six months after the Six Day War.
16. On Eshkol's warnings, see Prittie, *Eshkol*, pp. 211, 244; and Weitz, "Man of Consensus," pp. 186-187. Eshkol quotes from Moshe A. Gilboa, *Six*

Years, Six Days: The Origins and Events of the Six Day War (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1969), pp. 34, 36. [Hebrew] Eshkol quote from Haber, *Today*, p. 54.

17. Eshkol's reluctance to repeat that trauma led him to rebuke Rabin when the latter publicly pledged to repay Damascus for its aggression. Haber, *Today*, pp. 54, 122, 133-134, 146-147; Michael Brecher, *Decisions in Crisis: Israel, 1967 and 1973* (Berkeley: University of California, 1980), p. 36; Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library (hereafter "LBJ"), National Security Files, NSC Histories, Middle East Crisis, Box 17: Tel Aviv to Secretary of State, May 12, 1967; Gilboa, *Six Years, Six Days*, pp. 98-101; *Middle East Record*, iii (1967), p. 187; Richard B. Parker, *The Politics of Miscalculation in the Middle East* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1993), pp. 105, 15-18; Richard B. Parker, *The Six Day War: A Retrospective* (Jacksonville: University Press of Florida, 1996), pp. 263, 31-32, 69; Weizman, *On Eagles' Wings*, p. 208.

18. Interview with Miriam Eshkol, August 30, 1999. See also George W. Gawrych, *The Albatross of Decisive Victory: War and Policy Between Egypt and Israel in the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli Wars* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2000), p. 3.

19. LBJ, National Security Files, NSC Histories, Middle East Crisis, Box 17: Tel Aviv to Secretary of State, May 12, 1967; Public Record Office (hereafter "PRO"), FCO 17/577, Israel—Defense: Report of Defense Attache, November 16, 1966; Haber, *Today*, pp. 141, 145-147 (Eshkol quote); Gilboa, *Six Years, Six Days*, pp. 98-101; Parker, *Miscalculation*, pp. 15-18; Parker, *Six Day War*, pp. 31-32, 69; Eyal Sisser, "Between Israel and Syria: The Six Day War and Afterward," *Iyunim Bitkumat Yisrael* 8 (1998), p. 220.

20. United Nations Archive (hereafter "UN"), DAG 13/3.4.0, Box 84: HJKIMAC, El-Farra to Secretary General, February 6, 1967; Bull to Sasson, May 15, 1967; LBJ, National Security Files, Middle East, Israel Boxes 140, 141: Katzenbach to President, May 2, 1967; NAC, RG 25, Box 10050: Political Affairs—Canada's Foreign Policy Trends and Relations—Israel: Israel's Independence Day Parade, May 15, 1967; Israel State Archives (hereafter "ISA"), 3977/22 Diplomatic Relations with the United States: Bitan to Evron, April 16, 1967; Israel Labor Party Archives (hereafter "ILP"), Party Secretariat Protocols, 2/24/66/88: December 15, 1966. Ben-Gurion quote from *Davar*, May 9, 1967.

21. ISA, 4078/4 Foreign Ministry Files, Contacts with the United States on the Entry of Egyptian Forces to Sinai: Harman Conversation with Rostow, May 15, 1967; 3977/20 Foreign Ministry Files, Relations with the United States: Eban to Washington, London, Paris, May 15, 1967; LBJ, National Security Files, NSC Histories, Middle East Crisis, Box 17: Department of State to Cairo, May 15, 1967; Shlomo Nakdimon, *Toward H-Hour* (Tel Aviv: Ramdor, 1968), pp. 17-18 [Hebrew]; Gideon Rafael, *Destination Peace: Three Decades of Israeli Foreign Policy* (New York: Stein and Day, 1981), pp. 136-137.

22. ISA, 6444/4 North America, Telegrams: Foreign Ministry to Embassies, May 19, 1967; 7920/1 Levi Eshkol Papers, Diplomatic Telegrams: Eban to Rafael, May 17, 1967; LBJ, National Security Files, NSC Histories, Middle East Crisis, Box 17: Department of State to Cairo, May 15, 1967; History of the Middle East Conflict, Box 20: United States Policy and Diplomacy in the Middle East Crisis, May 15-June 10, 1967, pp. 11-12. Eshkol quote from interview with Miriam Eshkol, August 30, 1999; Parker, *Six Day War*, p. 137; Haber, *Today*, pp. 147-150; Matityahu Mayzel, *The Golan Heights Campaign: June 1967* (Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 2001), pp. 99-103 [Hebrew]; Abraham Rabinovich, *The Battle for Jerusalem, June 5-7, 1967* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1972), p. 5; Meir Amit, *Head to Head: A Personal View of Great Events and Clandestine Operations* (Or Yehuda: Hed Artzi, 1999), pp. 226-227. [Hebrew]

23. ISA, 4078/8 U.S. Reactions to the Closing of the Straits, Eban to Harman, May 16, 1967; Israel Defense Forces Archive (hereafter "IDF"), 710/70 general staff Discussion: May 17, 1967; Trevor Nevitt Dupuy, *Elusive Victory: The Arab-Israeli Wars, 1947-1974* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 239; Haber, *Today*, pp. 150-151; U Thant, *View from the UN* (New York: Doubleday, 1978), p. 219; Rabin, *Memoirs*, pp. 68-70; Nasser quote from BBC Daily Report, Middle East, Africa, and Western Europe, ME/2467/A/2. Syrian quote from Menahem Mansoor, *Arab World: Political and Diplomatic History, 1900-1967: A Chronological Study* (NCR, Microcard Editors), entry for May 16, 1967.

24. LBJ, National Security Files, History of the Middle East Conflict, Box 20: United States Policy and Diplomacy in the Middle East Crisis, May 15-June 10, 1967, pp. 12-14; ISA, 6444/4 North America, Telegrams: Foreign Ministry to Embassies, May 19, 1967; 7920/1 Levi Eshkol Papers, Diplomatic Telegrams: Eban to Rafael, May 17, 1967; IDF, 710/70 general staff Discussion: May 17, 1967; UN, S 0316-Box 9, File 2: UNEF Withdrawals, Exchange with UAR, Aide-Memoire, U Thant to UAR, May 17, 1967; Parker, *Miscalculation*, p. 68; Indarjit Rikhye, *The Sinai Blunder: Withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force Leading to the Six-Day War of June 1967* (London: Frank Cass, 1980), p. 16.

25. ISA, 7920/4 Levi Eshkol Papers, Prime Minister's Reports and Surveys: Eshkol's Reports to Ministerial Defense Committee, May 18, 1967; Haber, *Today*, p. 153; Rabin, *Memoirs*, pp. 70-71; David Kimche and Dan Bawley, *The Sandstorm: The Arab-Israeli War of June 1967: Prelude and Aftermath* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), p. 136.

26. The White House also turned down Israel's requests for expediting the delivery of tanks and jets already purchased by Israel. ISA, 4087/6 Foreign Ministry Files, Emergency Appeal: Eshkol to Harman, May 17, 1967; Abba

Eban, *Personal Witness: Israel Through My Eyes* (New York: Putnam, 1992), pp. 36-38; Lyndon Baines Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), p. 290; William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1993), p. 28.

27. ISA, 4084/2 Foreign Ministry Files, Relations with France: Eshkol to de Gaulle, May 19, 1967; 4080/5 Contacts with Great Britain: London to Foreign Ministry, May 18, 1967; 4078/4 Foreign Ministry Files, Contacts with the United States on the Entry of Egyptian Forces into Sinai: Eshkol to Johnson, May 18, 1967; LBJ, National Security Files, NSC Histories, Middle East Crisis, Box 17: Summary of Arab-Israel Developments, Night of May 19-20, 1967; Tel Aviv to Secretary of State, May 21, 1967.

28. ISA, 7920/2 Levi Eshkol Papers, Diplomatic Telegrams, USSR: Conversation with the Soviet Ambassador, May 19, 1967; LBJ, National Security Files, History of the Middle East Conflict, Box 20: United States Policy and Diplomacy in the Middle East Crisis, May 15-June 10, 1967, p. 13 (Johnson letter to Eshkol); PRO, PREM 13 1617: The Middle East Crisis: Record of Conversation Between the Foreign Secretary and the Israeli Ambassador, May 19, 1967; Haber, *Today*, p. 154; Avigdor Dagan, *Moscow and Jerusalem: Twenty Years of Relations Between Israel and the Soviet Union* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1970), pp. 211-212.

29. IDF, 710/70 general staff Discussion: May 19, 1967; ISA, 4088/11 The Entry into Sinai of Egyptian Troops and the Closure of the Tiran Straits, Report of Research Branch, May 22, 1967. Egyptian quote from BBC Daily Report, Middle East, Africa, and Western Europe, no. A-1g; Mansoor, *Arab World*, entries for May 18, 19, 20, 21, 1967. Syrian quote from *Al-Bath*, May 18, 1967.

30. ISA, 6444/5 North America, Telegrams: Foreign Ministry to Embassies, May 31, 1967; Ben-Gurion Archives (hereafter "BGA"), Diary, Entry for May 22, 1967; LBJ, National Security Files, History of the Middle East Conflict, Box 20: United States Policy and Diplomacy in the Middle East Crisis, May 15-June 10, 1967, pp. 27-28, 43-44; Rabin, *Memoirs*, pp. 72-83; Slater, *Rabin of Israel*, pp. 126-127; Dan Kurzman, *Soldier of Peace: The Life of Yitzhak Rabin* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), pp. 208-209; Haber, *Today*, pp. 155, 161-162 (Eshkol cabinet quotes), 188 (Rabin quote). Eshkol Knesset quote from Henry M. Christman, ed., *The State Papers of Levi Eshkol* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1969), p. 88.

31. ISA, 7919/1 Levi Eshkol Files, Diplomatic Telegrams, U.S.A.: Harman to Eban, May 22, 1967; Haber, *Today*, pp. 159, 166-169; Rabin, *Memoirs*, p. 77 (Yariv quote); Haber, *Today*, p. 164 (Weizman quote).

32. Eban, *Personal Witness*, pp. 363-370; Moshe Raviv, *Israel at Fifty: Five Decades of the Struggle for Peace* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1998), pp. 92-93; interview with Zerah Warhaftig, February 23, 1999. See also Brecher, *Decisions in Crisis*, p. 120; Aryeh Brown, *Personal Stamp: Moshe Dayan and the Six Day War* (Tel Aviv: Yedi'ot Aharonot, 1997), pp. 20-23. [Hebrew]

33. ISA, 5937/30 Secret Memoranda Prior to the Six Day War: Paris to Foreign Ministry, Protocol of Eban Meeting with President de Gaulle, May 25, 1967; 7920/1 Levi Eshkol Papers, Diplomatic Telegrams: The Wilson-Eban Conversation, May 24, 1967; LBJ, National Security Files, History of the Middle East Conflict, Box 20: United States Policy and Diplomacy in the Middle East Crisis, May 15-June 10, 1967, pp. 39-40; PRO, CAB 128/42 31st Conclusions: May 24, 1967; PREM 13 1617: The Middle East Crisis, May 23, 1967; Eban, *Personal Witness*, pp. 372-377; Jean Lacouture, *De Gaulle: The Ruler, 1945-1970* (New York: Norton, 1992), p. 439; Maurice Couve de Murville, *Foreign Policy 1958-1969* (Paris: Plon, 1971), p. 469 [French]; Harold Wilson, *The Chariot of Israel: Britain, America, and the State of Israel* (New York: Norton, 1981), pp. 333-334; Haber, *Today*, pp. 171-175; Gilboa, *Six Years, Six Days*, p. 129; Shlomo Gazit, *Innocents Entrapped: Thirty Years of Israeli Policy in the Territories* (Tel Aviv: Zemora Bitan, 1999), p. 28. [Hebrew]

34. Haber, *Today*, p. 187; Ami Gluska, *The Dispute Between Israel's Army Command and the Political Leadership During the "Waiting Period" of May-June 1967* (Jerusalem: Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, 2001), pp. 17-22.

35. Haber, *Today*, pp. 187-188; Gluska, *Dispute*, pp. 17-22.

36. Haber, *Today*, pp. 187-188; Gluska, *Dispute*, pp. 17-22.

37. LBJ, National Security Files, Memos to President (W. Rostow), Box 16: Rusk to Cairo and Tel Aviv, May 25, 1967; History of the Middle East Conflict, Box 20: United States Policy and Diplomacy in the Middle East Crisis, May 15-June 10, 1967, pp. 30-33, 56-57; ISA, 5937/30 Secret Memoranda Prior to the Six-Day War: Evron to Ministry, Report on the 1.5-Hour Meeting Between Foreign Minister Eban and President Johnson at the White House, May 26, 1967; 7919/1 Levi Eshkol Files, Diplomatic Telegrams, U.S.A.: Eban to Eshkol, May 26, 1967; Muhammad Hassanayn Heikal, *1967: The Explosion* (Cairo: Marcaz al-Ahram, 1990), pp. 564-565 [Arabic]; interview with Robert McNamara, February 16, 2000; Eban, *Personal Witness*, pp. 386-394; Raviv, *Israel at Fifty*, pp. 100-101; Quandt, *Peace Process*, p. 514 n. 53; Walt Whitman Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power: An Essay in Recent History* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 417.

38. ISA, 7920/4 Levi Eshkol Papers, Prime Minister's Reports and Surveys, Meeting of the Cabinet, May 27, 1967; 7920/2 Diplomatic Telegrams, USSR:

Allon to Eban, May 21, 1967; 3977/22 Foreign Ministry Files, Relations with the United States: Foreign Ministry to Embassies, May 27, 1967; 5937/30 Secret Memoranda Prior to the Six Day War: Evron to Foreign Ministry, May 27, 1967; Haber, *Today*, p. 192; Nakdimon, *Toward H-Hour*, p. 130; Rabin, *Memoirs*, pp. 89-90; Eban, *Personal Witness*, pp. 396-399; Raviv, *Israel at Fifty*, pp. 102-103; MPA, Party Secretariat Protocols, 2/24/66/88: June 1, 1967. See also Michael Brecher, *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale, 1975), p. 400; Brecher, *Decisions in Crisis*, p. 146; Gluska, *Dispute*, pp. 17-22.

39. ISA, 3977/22 Foreign Ministry Files, Relations with the United States: Foreign Ministry to Embassies, May 27, 1967; 5937/30 Secret Memoranda Prior to the Six Day War: Evron to Foreign Ministry, May 27, 1967; LBJ, National Security Files, NSC Histories, Middle East Crisis, Box 17: Johnson to Eshkol, May 27, 1967, Johnson to Barbour, May 27, 1967.

40. Rabin, *Memoirs*, pp. 90-91.

41. ISA, 7920/4 Levi Eshkol Papers, Prime Minister's Reports and Surveys, Meeting of the Cabinet, May 27, 1967; Haber, *Today*, p. 192; Rabin, *Memoirs*, pp. 89-90; Eban, *Personal Witness*, pp. 396-399; Raviv, *Israel at Fifty*, pp. 102-103; USNA, POL ARAB-IS, Tel Aviv Files, Tel Aviv to Secretary of State, May 28, 1967; ILP, Party Secretariat Protocols, 2/24/66/88: June 1, 1967. See also Brecher, *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy*, p. 400; Brecher, *Decisions in Crisis*, p. 146.

42. IDF, 1977/1786 The Regular Paratrooper Brigade in the Six Day War, Commander 35th Brigade, p. 626; interview with Miriam Eshkol; Haber, *Today*, pp. 194-196; Ze'ev Schiff, "The Hourglass," *Ha'aretz*, May 29, 1967, p. 2.

43. Ariel Sharon, *Warrior* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), pp. 181-184; Haber, *Today*, pp. 194-198; Brown, *Personal Stamp*, pp. 25-26; Gluska, *Dispute*, pp. 23-27; Rabin, *Memoirs*, pp. 92-94; Weizman, *On Eagles' Wings*, pp. 214-216; interview with Yeshayahu Gavish, December 7, 1999; interview with Rehavam Ze'evi, September 9, 2001.

44. Gluska, *Dispute*, pp. 34-36.

45. BGA, Diary, Entries for May 28, 1967; "A National Leadership Is Needed," *Ha'aretz*, May 29, 1967, p. 2; Shimon Peres, *Battling for Peace: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 1995), pp. 90-93; Haber, *Today*, pp. 182, 200-201; ILP, 2/24/66/88: Meeting of the Executive Committee, June 1, 1967; Gluska, *Dispute*, pp. 29-33; Rabin, *Memoirs*, p. 94; Golda Meir, *My Life* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1975), pp. 362-363; Amos Perlmutter, *The Life and Times of Menachem Begin* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), p. 283; Gawrych, *Albatross of Decisive Victory*, p. 19; Nakdimon, *Toward H-Hour*, pp. 61-81, 102; Brown, *Personal Stamp*, pp. 29-30; Shabtai Teveth, *Moshe Dayan: A Biography*

(Jerusalem: Schocken, 1973), pp. 564-565. [Hebrew] Eshkol quote from Zaki Shalom and S. Ilan Troen, "Ben-Gurion's Diary for the 1967 Six-Day War: An Introduction," *Israel Studies* 4:2 (Fall 1999), p. 197.

46. On Hussein's visit to Cairo, see Heikal, *Explosion*, pp. 694-695; USNA, POL ARAB-ISR, Box 9: Amman to Secretary of State, May 31, 1967; Samir A. Mutawi, *Jordan in the 1967 War* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1987), pp. 108-110; Hussein, King of Jordan, *My "War" with Israel*, trans. June P. Wilson and Walter B. Michaels (New York: Morrow, 1969), pp. 43-48; Efraim Kamm, *Hussein Wages War: The Six Day War from the Jordanian Perspective* (Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1974), p. 283 [Hebrew]; Mohamad Ibrahim Faddah, *The Middle East in Transition: A Study of Jordan's Foreign Policy* (New York: Asia, 1974), p. 75. Figures on the Arab military from Rabin, *Memoirs*, p. 100; Aref quote from BBC Daily Report, Middle East, Africa, and Western Europe, no. 1 bg.

47. ISA, 4086/8 Foreign Ministry Files, Red Cross: Foreign Ministry to the Hague, May 30, 1967; 4087/1 Egyptian Army Entry into Sinai and Closure of the Tiran Straits: Copenhagen to Foreign Ministry, June 3, 1967; 4087/6 Emergency Appeal: Rothschild to Sapir, May 28, 1967; 7920/3 Levi Eshkol Papers, Diplomatic Telegrams, General: Bonn to Foreign Ministry, June 1, 1967; PRO, PREM 13 1619: The Middle East Crisis: Tel Aviv to Foreign Office, June 4, 1967.

48. Avraham Rabinovich, "The War That Nobody Wanted," *The Jerusalem Post Magazine*, June 13, 1997, p. 12; Prittie, *Eshkol*, pp. 101-102; Haber, *Today*, pp. 183, 203, 209; Weizman, *On Eagles' Wings*, pp. 217-218; Brown, *Personal Stamp*, pp. 26-27.

49. Teveth, *Moshe Dayan*, pp. 570-571; Rabin, *Memoirs*, p. 94; Haber, *Today*, pp. 200, 220; Mayzel, *Golan Heights Campaign*, pp. 241-243; Moshe Dayan, *Story of My Life* (London: Sphere, 1976), pp. 340-341; Michael Shashar, *Conversations with Rehavam "Ghandi" Ze'evi* (Tel Aviv: Yedi'ot Aharonot, 1992), p. 165. [Hebrew]

50. LBJ, National Security Files, History of the Middle East Conflict, Box 20: United States Policy and Diplomacy in the Middle East Crisis, May 15-June 10, 1967, pp. 69-70, 81-88. Johnson, *Vantage Point*, p. 294; Brown, *Personal Stamp*, pp. 28-29, 43-44; Haber, *Today*, pp. 203, 249; Dayan, *My Life*, pp. 338-339.

51. LBJ, National Security Files, NSC Histories, Middle East Crisis, Box 18: W. Rostow to President, June 2, 1967; NSC Histories, Middle East Crisis, Box 17: The President in the Middle East Crisis, December 19, 1968; USNA, Middle East Crisis Files, 1967, Box 17: Ninth Control Group Meeting, June 3, 1967; ISA, 7919/1 Levi Eshkol Files, Diplomatic Telegrams: Evron to Bitan, May 29, 1967; PRO, FO 17/489, Israel—Political Affairs: Foreign Ministry to

Washington, June 2, 1967; interview with Avraham Liff, September 13, 1999; interview with Shlomo Merom, December 7, 1999; Quandt, *Peace Process*, pp. 46-47.

52. Interview with Meir Amit, February 9, 1999; McNamara quote from Amit's Report on Visit to the United States, June 4, 1967, access to which was furnished during the interview; ISA, 6444/5 North America, Telegrams: Ministry to Embassies, Head of the Mossad to Mossad, June 1, 1967; Head of the Mossad to Mossad, June 2, 1967; LBJ, National Security Files, NSC Histories, Middle East Crisis, Box 18: W. Rostow to President, June 2, 1967; interview with McNamara, February 11, 2000; Quandt, *Peace Process*, pp. 43-45; Parker, *Six Day War*, pp. 124-125, 136.

53. ISA, 7919/1 Levi Eshkol Files, Diplomatic Telegrams, U.S.A.: Harman to Bitan, May 24, 1967; Rafael to Eban, June 4, 1967; Haber, *Today*, p. 203; Dayan, *My Life*, pp. 340-341; Rabin, *Memoirs*, p. 97; Brown, *Personal Stamp*, p. 35; Eban, *Personal Witness*, p. 405; Laura Kalman, *Abe Fortas: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale, 1990), pp. 300-301; Parker, *Miscalculation*, pp. 119-120; Rafael, *Destination Peace*, pp. 153-154. Fortas message cited in Quandt, *Peace Process*, pp. 45-46.

54. LBJ, National Security Files, History of the Middle East Conflict, Box 20: United States Policy and Diplomacy in the Middle East Crisis, May 15-June 10, 1967, pp. 96-97; Arthur J. Goldberg oral history, p. 22; ISA, 7919/1 Levi Eshkol Files, Diplomatic Telegrams: U.S.A.: Rafael to Eban, June 4, 1967; Gluska, *Dispute*, pp. 38-44; Haber, *Today*, pp. 203-212; Rabin, *Memoirs*, pp. 96-97; Dayan, *My Life*, pp. 338-341; Brown, *Personal Stamp*, pp. 28-35; Aharon Yariv, *Cautious Assessment: An Anthology* (Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1998), pp. 57-58 [Hebrew]; interview with Merom.

55. Haber, *Today*, pp. 216-218 (Amit quote); Dayan, *My Life*, p. 342; Amit, Report on Visit to the United States, June 4, 1967.

56. Haber, *Today*, pp. 206-214; Rabin, *Memoirs*, pp. 96-97; Sharon, *Warrior*, pp. 185-186; Brown, *Personal Stamp*, pp. 28-29; Gluska, *Dispute*, pp. 38-44; Mayzel, *Golan Heights Campaign*, pp. 48-50; Dayan, *My Life*, pp. 338-339; Yariv, *Cautious Assessment*, pp. 57-58; Hanoch Bartov, *Dado: Forty-Eight Years and Twenty Days* (Tel Aviv: Ma'ariv, 1979), vol. i, pp. 121-125. [Hebrew]

57. ISA, 4091/23 Foreign Ministry Files, Exchange of Messages Before the War: Kosygin to Eshkol, June 2, 1967; 7920/2 Levi Eshkol Papers, Diplomatic Telegrams, France: Meroz to Eban, June 3, 1967.

58. LBJ, National Security Files, History of the Middle East Conflict, Box 20: United States Policy and Diplomacy in the Middle East Crisis, May 15-June 10, 1967, pp. 97-98; Johnson to Eshkol, June 3, 1967; Intelligence Information Cable: France, June 3, 1967.

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59. Haber, *Today*, pp. 206-219; Gluska, *Dispute*, pp. 38-44.
60. Haber, *Today*, pp. 221; Robert Slater, *Warrior Statesman: The Life of Moshe Dayan* (New York: St. Martin's, 1991), p. 264.
61. Interview with Merom.
62. ISA, 7920/4 Levi Eshkol Papers, Prime Minister's Speeches, Surveys, and Reports: Bitan to Harman, Evron, Eban, and Rafael, June 6, 1967; 7920/3 Diplomatic Telegrams, Negotiations: Harman to Prime Minister, June 6, 1967; IDF, 717/77, File 32: Summary of the Battle for the Southern Front, p. 29.
63. Haber, *Today*, pp. 228-231 (Eshkol quote and cabinet decision); Brown, *Personal Stamp*, pp. 58-59; Dayan, *My Life*, pp. 358-359; Ammunition Hill Archive, Begin to Motta Gur, June 15, 1992; Moshe Zak, *Hussein Makes Peace* (Ramat Gan: Begin-Sadat Center, 1996), p. 110 [Hebrew]; Hussein, *My "War" with Israel*, p. 73; Uzi Benziman, *Jerusalem, City Without Walls* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1973), pp. 13-19 [Hebrew]; Nadav Shragai, *Hill of Contention: The Struggle for the Temple Mount—Jews and Muslims, Religion and Politics, Since 1967* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1995), pp. 18-20 [Hebrew]; Eban, *Personal Witness*, p. 412.
64. USNA, Middle East Crisis Files, 1967, Box 1: Chronology of U.S.-Jordanian Consultations on the Middle East, June 7, 1967; PRO, PREM 13 1620: The Middle East Crisis: Foreign Office to Amman, June 7, 1967; Amman to Foreign Office, June 7, 1967; FCO 17/493, Israel—Political Affairs: Foreign Office to Amman, June 7, 1967; Tel Aviv to Foreign Office, June 7, 1967; ISA, 7920/1 Levi Eshkol Papers, Diplomatic Telegrams: Eban to Eshkol, June 7, 1967; 7920/4 Levi Eshkol Papers, Prime Minister's Speeches, Surveys, and Reports: Eshkol's Remarks to the Knesset Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee, June 7, 1967; Remez to Levavi, June 7, 1967.
65. LBJ, National Security Files, History of the Middle East Conflict, Box 20: United States Policy and Diplomacy in the Middle East Crisis, May 15-June 10, 1967, pp. 129-133; USNA, Middle East Crisis Files, 1967, Box 1: Chronology of U.S.-Jordanian Consultations on the Middle East, June 7, 1967; ISA, 4086/4 Foreign Ministry Files, Security Council Meetings 2: Director General's Office to Levavi and the Ministry; IDF, 192/74/1076: Round-Table Discussion on the Liberation of Jerusalem; 901/67/1 Central Command: Six Day War, Concluding Report, Part A; Haber, *Today*, pp. 233, 238, 242, 243 (Eshkol quotes); Zak, *Hussein Makes Peace*, pp. 110-115; Motta Gur, *The Temple Mount Is in Our Hands! The Battles of the Paratroopers in Jerusalem in the Six Day War* (Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1974), pp. 410-419 [Hebrew]; Benziman, *City Without Walls*, pp. 20-21; Shragai, *Hill of Contention*, p. 21; Brown, *Personal Stamp*, p. 67.
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66. PRO, FCO 17/493, Israel—Political Affairs: Damascus to Foreign Office, June 6, 1967; Haber, *Today*, pp. 241-245; Mayzel, *Golan Heights Campaign*, p. 203; Brown, *Personal Stamp*, pp. 83-85; Yehezkel Hame'iri, *On Both Sides of the Heights* (Tel Aviv: Levin-Epstein, 1970), pp. 25-31 [Hebrew]; Gilboa, *Six Years, Six Days*, p. 235; Bartov, *Dado*, vol. i, p. 101.

67. ISA, 7920/2 Levi Eshkol Papers, Diplomatic Telegrams, USSR: Tekoa to New York, June 7, 1967 (Kosygin cable to Eshkol); PRO, FCO 17/493, Israel—Political Affairs: Kosygin to Wilson, June 7, 1967; LBJ, National Security Files, NSC Histories, Middle East Crisis, Box 23: Tel Aviv to Secretary of State, June 8, 1967 (Chuvakhin quote); Dagan, *Moscow and Jerusalem*, pp. 229-230.

68. The cabinet protocol appears in Zerah Warhaftig, *Fifty Years and a Year: Memoirs* (Jerusalem: Yad Shapira, 1998), pp. 186-189. [Hebrew] See also Brown, *Personal Stamp*, p. 83. Eshkol quotes from Warhaftig, *Fifty Years*, pp. 190-191; *Eretz Hagolan*, 100 (1985), pp. 32-33; Haber, *Today*, pp. 244-246; Gilboa, *Six Years, Six Days*, p. 232; USNA, POL ARAB-ISR, United Nations Files, Box 1: Tel Aviv to Secretary of State, June 8, 1967; Carmit Guy, *Bar-Lev* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1998), p. 139. [Hebrew]

69. Warhaftig, *Fifty Years*, pp. 189-191; *Eretz Hagolan*, 100 (1985), pp. 32-33; Haber, *Today*, pp. 247-250; Bartov, *Dado*, vol. i, p. 133; Brown, *Personal Stamp*, pp. 85-86; Hame'iri, *Both Sides of the Heights*, pp. 30-31; Mayzel, *Golan Heights Campaign*, pp. 258, 264-265.

70. ISA, 4086/6 Foreign Ministry Files, Security Council Meetings: Rafael to Tekoa, June 9, 1967; Dayan, *My Life*, p. 382; Rabin, *Memoirs*, pp. 115-116; Warhaftig, *Fifty Years*, p. 200; Bartov, *Dado*, vol. i, pp. 101-103; Mayzel, *Golan Heights Campaign*, pp. 230-232; Brown, *Personal Stamp*, pp. 76-77, 80, 87-88, 90-91; Haber, *Today*, pp. 250-253 (Eshkol quote); Amos Gilboa, "The Six Day War: Thirty Years After," *Ma'ariv*, June 6, 1997, p. 15; Mayzel, *Golan Heights Campaign*, pp. 232-233, 255-257, 272-274.

71. Brown, *Personal Stamp*, pp. 94-95; Haber, *Today*, pp. 253-256. BGA, Diary, Entries for June 9 and 11, 1967; Mayzel, *Golan Heights Campaign*, pp. 317-318. Quotes from Warhaftig, *Fifty Years*, pp. 196-199; Haber, *Today*, p. 256.

72. USNA, POL ARAB-ISR, Tel Aviv File, Box 6: Tel Aviv to Secretary of State, June 10, 1967; LBJ, National Security Files, NSC Histories, Middle East Crisis, Box 23: Secretary of State to Tel Aviv, June 9, 1967 (Rusk quote); Box 17: The President in the Middle East Crisis, December 19, 1968; ISA, 7919/1 Levi Eshkol Files, Diplomatic Telegrams, U.S.A.: Harman to Eshkol, June 9, 1967; 4086/6 Foreign Ministry Files, Security Council Meetings: Rafael to Tekoa,

June 9, 1967; PRO, FO 17/495: Israel—Political Affairs: Tel Aviv to Foreign Office, June 9, 1967; UN, DAG 1/5.2.2.1.2-2, Middle East: Rafael to Secretary General, June 9, 1967; Arthur Lall, *The UN and the Middle East Crisis, 1967* (New York: Columbia University, 1968), pp. 77-78.

73. ISA, 4083/3 Foreign Ministry Files, Contacts with the Soviet Union: Katz to Foreign Ministry, June 10, 1967; 7920/2 Levi Eshkol Papers, Diplomatic Telegrams, USSR: Katz to Prime Minister, June 10, 1967; LBJ, National Security Files, NSC Histories, Middle East Crisis, Box 23: Washington to Tel Aviv, June 9, 1967; Dagan, *Moscow and Jerusalem*, p. 232; Parker, *Six Day War*, p. 230; Eban, *Personal Witness*, pp. 425-426; Lall, *UN and the Middle East Crisis*, pp. 77-94; Dagan, *Moscow and Jerusalem*, p. 232.

74. Hame'iri, *Both Sides of the Heights*, pp. 187-188 (text of meeting with Eshkol, Dayan, and Elazar), 204-205. See also Bartov, *Dado*, vol. i, p. 106; Warhaftig, *Fifty Years*, pp. 191-192, 200; Brown, *Personal Stamp*, pp. 97-98; Mayzel, *Golan Heights Campaign*, pp. 332-333, 342-343; Rabin, *Memoirs*, pp. 117-118; LBJ, National Security Files, History of the Middle East Conflict, Box 20: United States Policy and Diplomacy in the Middle East Crisis, May 15-June 10, 1967, p. 152 (Barbour quote).

75. Interview with Ze'evi.

76. Eshkol quotes in PRO, PREM 13 1623: Tel Aviv to Foreign Office, September 4, 1967; *The Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1967-1968* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), vol. xx, pp. 82-83, 87. See also Gazit, *Innocents Entrapped*, pp. 143-144; interview with David Kimche, August 26, 1999; Sadia Touval, *The Peace-Brokers: Mediators in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1979* (Princeton: Princeton, 1982), pp. 134-153.

77. For his insights into the Jewish nature of Eshkol's leadership, I would like to thank R. Haskel Lookstein of Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun in Manhattan.

78. "One of the Leaders of His Generation," *Ha'aretz*, February 27, 1969, p. 2; "Eshkol—What Comes Next?" *Ma'ariv*, February 27, 1969, p. 8; interview with Miriam Eshkol.