

Glencoe/McGraw Hill, New York
American History []The Modern Era Since 1865, 2001

This textbook has egregious omissions and falsifications in its presentation of the Arab-Israeli Crisis, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

On page 653 of Chapter 21 “**Search for Stability 1952-1960**,” Section 4 “**Foreign Policy**,” in the subsection “**Middle East Powder Keg**,” the textbook states:

“The first explosion came in 1956 in Egypt. Egypt’s President Gamal Abdel Nasser was anxious to gain military superiority over the Jewish state. To get weapons, Egypt signed a commercial treaty with the Soviet Union, exchanging cotton—Egypt’s major cash crop—for tanks and guns. The United States had tried to forge friendly relations with Egypt by offering to loan the nation money to build a giant dam across the Nile River. But Nasser’s overtures toward the People’s Republic of China and the Soviet bloc forced Dulles to cancel the loan. Nasser responded by seizing the Suez Canal in July 1956.

Pertinent details have been omitted.. Without this information students cannot understand the events that took place. . On October 14, 1956, Nasser stated his reasons for nationalizing the Suez Canal and seeking arms from the Soviets and the Chinese. “Our hatred [of Israel] is very strong. There is no sense in talking about peace with Israel. There is not even the smallest place for negotiations.” On October 25 Nasser signed an agreement with Syria and Jordan that placed him in command of their armies as well, thereby paving the way for the destruction of Israel. Israel withdrew from its military actions to once again defend itself under US pressure, but the US assured Israel that it would maintain the freedom of navigation in the waterway. In addition, the US sponsored a UN resolution creating the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) to supervise the territories vacated by the Israeli forces.

Again on page 653 the textbook states:

“The British, French, and Israelis decided to attack Egypt and reclaim the Suez Canal, which provided a vital trade link between Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Acting independently of the United States, they invaded Egypt in October...During a heated debate in the United Nations, the United States voted with the Soviet Union to condemn the actions of Israel, Great Britain, and France. This pressure forced the three nations to agree to withdraw from Egypt.”

Once more pertinent details have been omitted.. Israel attacked Egypt mainly because of a systematic campaign of terrorist raids into its territory from the Egyptian controlled Sinai peninsula and the Gaza Strip and related Egyptian threats. The number of raids increased after 1955, as did overall Arab bellicosity toward Israel. In 1955 Egypt blockaded the Straits of Tiran, which in effect was an act of war, and began receiving massive arms supplies from the Soviet bloc. Israel also had other goals in joining with the British—primarily to get rid of Nasser—but it was the Egyptian raids and threats that above all drove it to act in 1956. One can come up with endless quotes from Nasser, including this one from October 1956: “There is no sense in talking about peace with Israel. There is not even the smallest place for negotiations.” Absolutely everything Nasser did and said shows that he meant what he was saying here. In the second

paragraph, the readers should be told how the 1967 war started and Nasser's stated goal at the time of destroying Israel.¹

On page 700 of Chapter 23 **'The Vietnam Era 1954-1975,'** Section 1 **"Cold War Challenges,"** in the subsection **"Israel and Korea [] Arab-Israeli War,"** the textbook states:

"Hostilities between Israel and the Arab nations in the Middle East were common and continuing. The United States, which had traditionally supported Israel since its founding in 1948, continued that support during the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, backed and armed Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, the three Arab nations involved. Being on opposite sides in this conflict heightened cold war tensions between the two superpowers. However, the speed of Israel's victory prevented an out-and-out clash between the two countries."

Pertinent details have been omitted and students cannot understand the events that took place in the region and led to the Six-Day War. The Arab rhetoric prior to the war was taking on an increasingly exterminationist tone with regard to Israel. While Nasser continued to make speeches threatening war, Arab terrorist attacks grew more frequent. In 1965, 35 raids were conducted against Israel. In 1966, the number increased to 41. In just the first four months of 1967, 37 attacks were launched. Meanwhile, Syria relentlessly attacked Israeli towns in the Galilee from the Golan Heights. On May 15, 1967, Egyptian troops began moving into the Sinai and massing near the Israeli border. By May 18, Syrian troops were prepared for battle along the Golan Heights. Also on May 18 Nasser declared, "The sole method we shall apply against Israel is total war, which will result in the extermination of Zionist existence." On May 20 Syrian Defense Minister Hafez Assad asserted, "I, as a military man, believe that the time has come to enter into a battle of annihilation [against Israel]."²

On page 783 of Chapter 26 **"Toward a New Century 1992-Present,"** in Section 2 **"America in a Changing World,"** in the subsection **"Peace Efforts in Ireland and the Middle East,"** the textbook states:

"Another enduring and difficult struggle was the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. When Israel was created from British-occupied Palestine in 1948, Palestinian Arabs were forced to move to the West Bank of the Jordan River. This area soon came under the control of Jordan. In 1964, with the support of Arab leaders, some of these displaced people formed the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to work toward the elimination of Israel and the creation of an independent Arab Palestine...Fearing an attack by its Arab neighbors, in 1967 Israel seized the Gaza Strip from Egypt as well as Jordanian territory west of the River Jordan, including Jordan's part of Jerusalem. For 20 years after the 1967 war, Arabs and Israelis could not agree on the future of the Israeli-occupied territories. Then in 1987 the Palestinians in both areas began an uprising."

The statement that Palestinian Arabs were forced to move to the West Bank of the Jordan River is false. Further the passage incorrectly portrays Israel as the aggressor and gives students the faulty impression that Israel seized the lands without just cause. It is true that Israel carried out a preemptive attack against Egypt on June 5, 1967. However, the textbook does not provide the students with any of the historical background information. The preemptive action was taken as

¹ Mitchell Bard, Guide to the Middle East Conflict 3rd Ed.(New York: Penguin, 2005), 180.

² Sari Nusseibeh, Once upon a Country (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 87.

a result of a crisis situation that included assertions of belligerent intent on the part of Israel's Arab neighbors and the mobilizing of large armies in Syria, Jordan, and Egypt, along Israel's borders. While Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser made speeches threatening war against Israel, Arab terrorist attacks increased. In 1965, there were 35 raids conducted against Israel and in 1966, the number of raids increased to 41. In the first four months of 1967, 37 attacks were conducted against Israel. Syria's attacks on Israeli kibbutzim in the Golan Heights increased and provoked a retaliatory strike by Israel on April 7, 1967.³ On May 22nd, 1967, in what amounted to an act of war, Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran to all Israeli shipping and all ships bound for Eilat. Nasser's blockade cut off Israel's only supply route with Asia and stopped Israel's supply of oil from Iran. Despite the fact that Israel asked King Hussein of Jordan not to join forces with Egypt and Syria, he signed a defense pact with Nasser on May 30th. Israel launched its preemptive strike and this was followed shortly by a general Arab-Israeli confrontation.⁴

On page 783 of Chapter 26 "Toward a New Century," Section 2 "America in a Changing World," in the Subsection "Israeli-PLO Agreement," the textbook states:

"The peace talks proceeded erratically until September 1993, when Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasir Arafat reached an agreement. The PLO recognized Israel's right to exist, and Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians.

This textbook perpetuates a major falsification about the Palestinian Liberation Organization. The PLO never honored its agreement. The PLO's recognition of Israel's right to exist was a verbal recognition only: Article 15 of the PLO charter, which explicitly denies Israel's right to exist, remains unchanged.⁵ The Palestinian map of the Middle East still does not show Israel, and Palestinian children are indoctrinated in their schools to deny Israel's right to exist.⁶

³ http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1948to1967_sixday_backgd.php.

⁴ Mitchell Bard. Myths and Facts. (Chevy Chase, MD: American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2005,) pp. 80-87.

⁵ http://philologos.org/bpr/files/misc_studies/ms013.htm, "Article 15: The liberation of Palestine, from an Arab viewpoint, is a national (qawmi) duty and it attempts to repel the Zionist and imperialist aggression against the Arab homeland, and aims at the elimination of Zionism in Palestine. Absolute responsibility for this falls upon the Arab nation - peoples and governments - with the Arab people of Palestine in the vanguard. Accordingly, the Arab nation must mobilize all its military, human, moral, and spiritual capabilities to participate actively with the Palestinian people in the liberation of Palestine. It must, particularly in the phase of the armed Palestinian revolution, offer and furnish the Palestinian people with all possible help, and material and human support, and make available to them the means and opportunities that will enable them to continue to carry out their leading role in the armed revolution, until they liberate their homeland.

⁶ <http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=466>