



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

A Level History A

Y321/01 The Middle East 1908–2011: Ottomans to Arab Spring

Wednesday 6 June 2018 – Afternoon

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes



You must have:

- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet (OCR12 sent with general stationery)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Answer Question 1 in Section A and any **two** questions in Section B.
- Write your answers in the Answer Booklet. The question number(s) must be clearly shown.
- Do **not** write in the barcodes.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- Quality of extended responses will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document consists of **4** pages.

SECTION A

Read the two passages and then answer Question 1.

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of why Israel was successful in the First Arab-Israeli War of 1948–49. [30]

Passage A

Early on 15 May 1948, units of the regular armies of Syria, Transjordan, Iraq and Egypt crossed the frontiers of Palestine in the hope of restoring territory to the Arabs. This apparently determined action by the independent Arab states masked their fatal disunity. It was the unanimous decision of the Arab League to intervene in Palestine, but the unity was no more than a façade. There was no effective liaison between the Arab armies and they did not act in concert*. Their military capacity did not reflect the overwhelming Arab superiority in numbers [of population], with 40 million Arabs confronting some 600,000 Zionist Jews. In fact to take the field Egypt had some 10,000 regular troops, Transjordan's Arab Legion 4,500, Syria 3,000, Lebanon 1,000 and Iraq 3,000. Their arms were British or French and in the case of Transjordan, the commander-in-chief General Glubb and senior officers were British. One surviving Arab statesman recalls that the Arab armies were useful only to perform ceremonial parades. They were confronting some 60,000 Jewish troops who, although never officially recognised by mandate, were armed and trained and many of whom already had battle experience. Added to this was the fact that some of the Arab leaders, especially in Syria and Iraq, were so ignorant of the situation that they expected a walk-over.

* *in concert* – coordinated

Adapted from P. Mansfield, *A History of the Middle East*, published in 1991.

Passage B

Jewish superiority in the battlefield was more a matter of manpower and firepower than willpower. The image of a Jewish David surrounded by a hostile Arab Goliath is not reflected in the relative size of Arab and Jewish forces. When five Arab states – Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Transjordan and Egypt – all went to war on May 15, total Arab forces did not exceed 25,000 men, whereas the Israeli Defence Force (as the army of the new state was designated) numbered 35,000. In the course of the war, both the Arabs and Israelis reinforced their troops, though the Arabs never came near to matching Israeli forces which reached 65,000 in mid-July, and peaked at over 96,000 by December 1948. The Israelis needed their numerical advantage. In the first phase of the war, which ran from May 15 until the initial truce of June 11, they were forced to fight a multifront battle for survival. During the first phase, all sides took heavy losses, though the Israeli position was perhaps the most vulnerable of all for having to take on so many armies simultaneously. To compensate for losses the Arab states tried to secure arms from the British, French and Americans but without success. The Israelis in contrast secured essential arms shipments via Czechoslovakia. When the ceasefire came to an end on July 9, Israel was better prepared than its adversaries for the resumption of hostilities. In the second phase of the war (lasting until July 19) the Israelis used their superiority of troop numbers and munitions to turn the tide against the Arab armies on every front.

Adapted from E. Rogan, *The Arabs: A History*, published in 2009.

SECTION B

Answer **TWO** of the following three questions.

- 2*** 'The most important turning point in relations between the Great Powers and the Middle East from 1908 to 2011 was the Gulf War of 1991.' How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 3*** 'Egypt was the dominant Arab state in the Middle East in the period from 1908 to 2011.' How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 4*** How far did differences between ethnic groups influence political relations in the Middle East from 1908 to 2011? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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