

SIX DAYS OF WAR: The Six-Day War  
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In June 1967, Israel defeated the combined forces of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, seizing control of the Sinai from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the West Bank from Jordan. Why did the Six-Day War unfold as it did? What lessons did the Arabs on the one side, and the Israelis on the other, draw from the war? And what lessons do the war and its aftermath have for the United States as it tries to forge a lasting peace in the Middle East?

Transcript:

Peter Robinson: Today on Uncommon Knowledge, six days of war and thirty-six years of stalemate.

Peter Robinson: Welcome to Uncommon Knowledge, I'm Peter Robinson. Our program today, the Six Day War. In six days in 1967, Israel defeated the combined forces of Egypt, Jordan and Syria, seizing control of the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, of the West Bank from Jordan and of the Golan Heights from Syria. What caused the war and what enabled the Israelis to inflict such a crushing defeat on the Arabs? What lessons did the Arabs and the Israelis learn from the conflict and what lessons should the United States draw from the 1967 war as it seeks to forge a lasting peace in the Middle East today?

Joining us today, historian Michael Oren. Oren is a senior fellow at the Shalem Center in Jerusalem. He is the author of the history, *Six Days of War* and most recently, of a novel entitled *Reunion*.

### **The End is Nigh**

Peter Robinson: On the eve of the Six Day War, Secretary of State Dean Rusk writes a note in which he concludes that "the Holy War psychology" of the Arab world had collided with the "apocalyptic psychology" of an Israel afraid for its survival. Titanic, deeply rooted, psychological forces in collision. Is that a fair summary?

Michael Oren: First let me first say what a brilliant statement that was by Dean Rusk. All right. I think he really summarized it very well. On one hand, the entire Arab world on the eve of the Six Day War was caught up in this tremendous tumult, this excitement, this millennial excitement about the eminent demise of the Jewish state. And the Jewish state had for that Arab world a tremendous meaning. It symbolized 300 years of frustration, anger, resentment, against a very aggressive West.

Peter Robinson: The state of Israel in 1967 is 19 years old. Why does it symbolize 300 years of frustration for the Arabs?

Michael Oren: Because the state of Israel is perceived in 1967 as a bridgehead of the West. Keep in mind that in 1948 when the state of Israel was born, the Arab States went to war against Israel and attempted to destroy it. That was the first great post-colonial test for these Arab regimes and they failed it. And they failed it egregiously. It was a tremendous embarrassment. Most of those regimes fell violently within the next few years. And that was an enduring trauma for the Arab world. The state of Israel represented the West and...

Peter Robinson: It represents the West because most of the Israelis at that point come from Western Europe?

Michael Oren: No, on the contrary. Most of them came from Eastern countries.

Peter Robinson: All right.

Michael Oren: Which is also part of the insult because the Jews, though they had a protected status in Muslim society, always had a protected inferior status. Here are Jews all of a sudden being victorious on the field of battles. That was a double insult. It wasn't just that the West was victorious, but Jews, Western Jews were being victorious. And that combined to trigger deep and profound resentments. Now if I may on the other hand...

Peter Robinson: Sure.

Michael Oren: ...the other side of Rusk's comment was also very perceptive because he talked about apocalyptic fears on the part of the Israelis. Israelis then and I think even to a large measure today, have this sort of bifurcated personality, which on one half tells them we can do anything. We are militarily invulnerable. And on the other hand, almost in the same breath, that same bifurcated personality tells them we are on the verge of destruction. We are on the edge of annihilation. And these two experiences--these two halves are born of real experience. They're born of the holocaust. They're born of 2,000 years of persecution, pogroms. On the other hand, they're born of the Israeli frontier experience, you know, the great bravura, the machismo of the Israeli experience. Prime Minister Levi Eshkol who was the Prime Minister of Israel in the 1967 war summarized this bifurcation. He called it *shimshon der nebechdikker* in Yiddish, which simply means "Sampson the nerd." On one hand, you're Sampson, on the other hand, you're a nerd.

Peter Robinson: Let's examine the motivations of each of the major combatants in the Six Day War beginning with Syria.

### **Withering Golan Heights**

Peter Robinson: 1967, April, Syria shells Israeli villages from the Golan Heights on Israel's northern border. Israel and Syria engage in aerial clashes. Israel shoots down six Syrian MiG fighters supplied by the Soviets. Syria appeals to Nasser of Egypt for backing. What are the Syrians thinking?

Michael Oren: That's one of the great questions always in Middle Eastern history, what are the Syrians thinking?

Peter Robinson: What do they have in their heads? There's so much here that seems mysterious. Why do they behave as they behave?

Michael Oren: The Syrians have their own dynamic, which in many ways, is separate than any other dynamic in the Middle East. Syria itself, in this time, is a country that's been pieced together mostly by the imperialists, by the French. Historically there's no state of Syria. All right. The French have cobbled together various people, Druze, Alawites, Sunnis, Shiites, and the Syrians during this period--the Middle East in general but the Syrians in particular in this period, are grappling for identity. And the big question is who and what are we? This is the major questions that are seizing the Arab world throughout the post-war period. And the Syrians alight on the notion that we are Arabs. That's what binds us together. And we are nationalists and we are socialists. We're radical socialists. All right, this is Baathism. This is what Baathism--this is a Baathist government.

Peter Robinson: Right.

Michael Oren: And a major component of Baathism is anti-colonialism and anti-Zionism. The raison d'etre of this regime is to liberate Palestine from colonialism and Zionism. So the Syrians almost can't help themselves. They have to foment...

Peter Robinson: They have to move?

Michael Oren: They have to move.

Peter Robinson: May 1967, Nasser moves 100,000 troops and 1,000 tanks into the Sinai Peninsula right on Israel's southern border. On May 17th, he announces the closure of the Straits of Tiran, effectively sealing Israel off from the Red Sea and important sources of oil. What is he thinking?

Michael Oren: He's thinking--and it took me a while--you know, if you study Nasser long enough--I've been studying him now for about twenty years, you begin to see the world...

Peter Robinson: Better you than me.

Michael Oren: ...through Nasser's eyes, right. It's interesting. I got some criticism in Israel for being a little bit too sympathetic to Nasser in my book. And I took it very well. I took it as a compliment. You begin to see that Nasser is making what are for him, very rational, logical decisions. He hates the fact that in 1956 as a result of a war waged by Israel and the two imperialist powers, Britain and France against him, Egypt is forced to accept UN peacekeeping forces on their soil.

Peter Robinson: '56 Suez Crisis.

Michael Oren: United Nations Emergency Force.

Peter Robinson: Right.

Michael Oren: That force sits along the border with Israel in Gaza and along the Straits of Tehran, assuring free passage for Israeli ships to Israel's southern port of Eilat. All right. The whole thing for Egypt, for Nasser in particular, is one colossal insult. All right. He's-- deep umbrage. He's looking for some reason, some excuse to get rid of this force. The Soviets come along--we haven't talked about the Soviets, they're big. Well, the Soviets here--on May 12th and they inform Anwar Sadat, all right, being a...

Peter Robinson: whose position...

Michael Oren: ...a hireling of Nasser. Formerly he was the Speaker of the National Assembly.

Peter Robinson: Okay. So he's one of the ruling circle.

Michael Oren: One of the ruling circle but not a particularly prominent one, not a very outstanding one at least. They inform Anwar Sadat while he's passing through en route home from North Vietnam that the Soviets have learned of a secret Israeli plan to invade Syria and capture the Syrian capital, Damascus.

Peter Robinson: And this is a fantasy?

Michael Oren: Well, the Egyptians find out very quickly that it is a fantasy.

Peter Robinson: All right.

Michael Oren: They go up to the northern border; they see that there are no Israeli troop concentrations there but Nasser decides to seize on it anyway for a political purpose, not for a military purpose. He sends his army through downtown Cairo parading--if he wanted to attack Israel, he'd do it quietly. That's what Sadat did in 1973. He parades them to the street, marches them in broad daylight into Sinai. He evicts UNEF. Gets rid of the UN forces.

Peter Robinson: Gets rid of the UN forces, which are embarrassing him.

Michael Oren: He closes the Straits of Tehran, the Arab world goes crazy. They have deified Nasser. It's like the old Nasser's back, the Nasser who once kicked the British out of Egypt, he's back. And he is the hero of the day. And what is the world community doing? The UN backs down. The French who were Israel's major arms suppliers, turn around and say to the Israelis sorry we're now going to support the other side. And that left the Americans--now the Americans had an agreement with the Israelis going back to the '56 war that if Nasser ever closed the Straits of Tehran again, the United States would

back Israeli military action to reopen the straits. The Americans--President Johnson say to the Israelis listen, we have this agreement but we're bogged down in Vietnam and we can't risk another foreign event so you're on your own. So from Nasser's perspective, Peter, he has taken these incremental steps and has not had to pay any price for it. He's only gained political benefit. The Israelis look like they're completely backing down. So it's a very logical process for him.

Peter Robinson: So it is rattling a saber for political purposes. He is not thinking of waging war? It's obvious he's not thinking of waging war because he's staging parades. He scorns any element of surprise.

Michael Oren: He however, is thinking of the possibility that Israelis will strike preemptively which is what he wants. He wants Israel to be blamed with triggering a Middle Eastern war and he figures that his army is strong enough to repulse the attack and carry the battle into Israeli territory.

Peter Robinson: Next, Jordan and King Hussein.

### **Take My Army, Please**

Peter Robinson: We've got Egyptian forces in the Sinai, Jordan now signs a treaty with Egypt placing Jordanian forces under Egyptian command. What is King Hussein doing?

Michael Oren: King Hussein--in his rhetoric was as anti-Israel as any Arab leader of his day but secretly King Hussein had a modus vivendi with the Israelis. He had open channels to them--to the British and the American Embassies. He would meet secretly with Israeli emissaries abroad. He did not want a war with Israel. It's the last thing he wanted. But before the war, Hussein faced a terrible dilemma. If Egypt went to war against Israel and Jordan didn't aid the Egyptian effort and the Egyptians lost, then all of the Arabs who considered Hussein a lackey of the imperialists anyway, they would rise up and use that as an excuse for killing him. But if Nasser went to war against Israel and Hussein didn't aid Nasser and Nasser won the war, then the Egyptian forces would conquer Israel and then they'd proceed into Amman and Nasser would kill King Hussein. So how do you get out of the dilemma? Hussein came up with what he thought was a brilliant scheme. He would abrogate all personal responsibility for the crisis by placing his army under direct Egyptian command. This he did and Egyptian Commander, General Riad arrived in Amman a few days before the war and that was fine. But on June 5th when the war broke out, General Riad got an order from Cairo to open fire on the Israelis. And that's how Jordan got involved in this war.

Peter Robinson: What are the Israelis thinking? Why do they move first? Surely they know that if things go--I mean, if Nasser says I want them to strike first, surely the Israelis are themselves thinking far better for us diplomatically if we don't.

Michael Oren: That--precisely. Now, talk about terrible dilemmas. And the Israeli government would--there were huge debates that went on for days and days and days

about whether we should strike first or absorb the first strike, whether we can absorb the first strike. Talking about a country that is eight miles long.

Peter Robinson: What made them feel so certain that there would be a strike? You've just told us...

Michael Oren: Well, they weren't certain.

Peter Robinson: ...that Nasser is saber rattling.

Michael Oren: It's an excellent question. They weren't certain that Nasser would strike. They thought that Nasser was trying to provoke Israel into firing the first shot but they were afraid of the situation. There was an organization called Al Fatah run by a gentlemen by the name of...

Peter Robinson: Yasser Arafat.

Michael Oren: ...Arafat. And Arafat was conducting terrorist guerilla operations across the border.

Peter Robinson: From Syria?

Michael Oren: From Syria and Lebanon and the West Bank.

Peter Robinson: And the West Bank.

Michael Oren: It was all very well situated. And Israel was afraid that if one of these terrorist organizations hit Israel in a large way, Israel would go to respond that that would trigger a general war and Israel would have lost the initiative. That all of these massive Arab forces arrayed against Israel would suddenly jump in and Israel would be overwhelmed. It was a very real scenario. Keep in mind...

Peter Robinson: Right.

Michael Oren: ...the Israeli military plans are very limited. They call for a surgical strike that's going to neutralize the Egyptian Air Force but on the ground will only eliminate the first of three Egyptian defense lines in Sinai. There were no plans to conquer the whole Sinai, no plans to conquer Gaza, the West Bank, Jerusalem or the Golan Heights.

Peter Robinson: Now to the Six Day War itself.

### **Horah, Horah, Horah**

Peter Robinson: June 5th, Israel strikes first, launching an aerial attack on Egyptian forces in the Sinai. They time the attack for 8:45 in the morning to catch the maximum

number of Egyptian aircraft on the ground and a point I had not heard anywhere else than your book, the Egyptian high command stuck in rush hour traffic.

Michael Oren: Egyptian high command was stuck in traffic and also the Chief of Staff was flying in the air and he was afraid that his own troops would shoot at him so he ordered all of the anti aircraft units to shut down. So...

Peter Robinson: By noon that day really, it's over in the sense that the Israelis destroy the Egyptian air force. So they achieve air superiority, right? Give me the significance of what they...

Michael Oren: It's very significant but I don't think it's absolutely significant.

Peter Robinson: Oh, it's not?

Michael Oren: We have learned through military history that you don't need an air force to fight a very tough war. Look what the Germans did to the Americans after D-Day without much of an air force.

Peter Robinson: Right, right.

Michael Oren: You can dig in, you can fight or alternatively you can go to the UN and ask for an immediate ceasefire. The Egyptians did neither.

Peter Robinson: So on the first morning, the attack opens, the Israelis move first. They destroy 309 of the 340 Egyptian combat aircraft. And Egypt, within the first few hours of the conflict, suffers an enormous defeat. Why doesn't the whole thing just get called off on the first day? Why are we talking about a Six Day War?

Michael Oren: Again, Israel's plans call for a 48-hour war.

Peter Robinson: All right.

Michael Oren: Some of those 48 hours escalate. Why they escalate very briefly, because the Egyptian Army collapsed far more swiftly than anybody in Israel ever conceived.

Peter Robinson: So the Israeli defense forces get sucked into the Sinai?

Michael Oren: Literally sucked in. Literally sucked in. Matter of fact, the government can't even keep abreast of the momentum on the battlefield, which is too swift. In the government they kept thinking, oh we're at the Suez Canal, we weren't supposed to get to the Suez Canal. They didn't want them to get to the Suez Canal. All right. We're in Gaza, we don't want to go into Gaza. Then Jordan opens fire. Jordan opens fire first with howitzers in Jerusalem then long-range guns from Jenin into Tel Aviv and then their aircraft began to fire as well. So Israel strikes back at the Jordanians. And the Jordanian Army, which the Israelis assumed was the most powerful army in the world because the

Jordanians had severely beaten the Israelis in 1948 war, the Jordanian Army also melted away.

Peter Robinson: The Jordanian Army opens fire at about 11:00 on the first day of the war. By the next morning, Israel has effectively encircled the Jordanian forces and because of the air superiority, Israel prevents Jordanians in Jordan proper from re-supplying across the Jordan River. Is that accurate?

Michael Oren: That is a fair and an accurate assessment.

Peter Robinson: And again, this victory happens more quickly than the Israelis expect?

Michael Oren: They didn't even expect the front to open there at all.

Peter Robinson: I see.

Michael Oren: All right. Now the Syrians all the time are shelling from...

Peter Robinson: From the Golan Heights in the north.

Michael Oren: The Syrians who played such a prominent role in precipitating this war cleverly stay out of it. The rumor in the Arab world--the conventional wisdom in the Arab world is that the Syrians were willing to fight to the last Egyptian. And it's true. They stayed out of this war but they were shelling thousands of shells onto Israeli settlements. The Israeli government voted not to attack Syria. This is an interesting episode.

Peter Robinson: The Cabinet votes not to attack?

Michael Oren: They're afraid of Soviet intervention. The Soviets were so closely allied with the Syrians, they were afraid if Israel struck at Syria then the Soviets would intervene and destroy Israel. Many of the Israeli leaders in 1967 had grown up in Russia. They remembered the Cossacks and they were afraid of their--there's the nerd part. Okay.

Peter Robinson: Right.

Michael Oren: And it was Moshe Dayan on the last night of the war alone, after he himself was one of the most outspoken opponents of war against Syria, simply changed his mind. He gave the order...

Peter Robinson: Dayan is at what position?

Michael Oren: He is the Defense Minister.

Peter Robinson: All right.

Michael Oren: He gives the order to the Northern Command without consulting the Prime Minister, without consulting Rabin, the Chief of Staff...

Peter Robinson: He goes around his Chief Staff?

Michael Oren: He goes around everybody, gives them orders, says go attack.

Peter Robinson: And the attack moves again quickly.

Michael Oren: Actually moves less quickly than they anticipated. It was a very brutal fight. The Syrians fought tooth and nail.

Peter Robinson: Okay. So that's psychologically important.

Michael Oren: ...essentially shows you even without an air force, they had no air force, the army that sits and stands and fights even without an air force can hold out for a long time.

Peter Robinson: June 9th Israel turns its attention to the northern front. They move up the Golan Heights. By June 10th, they've got the Golan Heights but that's bitter difficult fighting. At 6:30 in the evening on June 10th or is it the morning--actually you'll have to correct me on that--Syria and Israel make a ceasefire agreement and Israel now controls all the Golan Heights.

Michael Oren: Does.

Peter Robinson: Is that in the morning or the evening?

Michael Oren: This is actually in the evening.

Peter Robinson: In the evening?

Michael Oren: So Israel has almost quadrupled its size in six days.

Peter Robinson: So just how did Israel achieve such an overwhelming victory?

### **The Stars of David**

Peter Robinson: They've got the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank all the way to the Jordan. For the first time in two thousand years, Jews are in control of the Wailing Wall, they've taken the Golan Heights, the world has been turned upside down. How did the Israelis do that?

Michael Oren: Well, it's not just the Israelis. The Arabs did it as well. Takes two to make a victory and defeat like this. The Israelis did this basically because they believed it was an existential struggle. It was either do that or die.

Peter Robinson: It's the apocalyptic mentality?

Michael Oren: That's the apocalyptic mentality. They were better organized, better trained, more highly motivated. You can go into the hardcore militaries. They had shorter supply lines.

Peter Robinson: But Michael, this is not a case where people--where Israelis laid down their lives for their country. Egypt loses 11,000 troops, Jordan 6,000, Syria 1,000, total of 18,000. Israel loses 700.

Michael Oren: But take it per capita.

Peter Robinson: All right.

Michael Oren: Peter, there's only 2 1/2 million Israelis and there are over 200 million Arabs.

Peter Robinson: All right.

Michael Oren: And even with this brilliant aerial victory, for example, Israel loses twenty percent of its aircraft. It was a costly war from Israel's point of view. It was not without its price. And it's interesting, though there has been subsequently a lot of criticism of Israeli arrogance after the war. In my research, I found evidence not just of the arrogance but of a tremendous amount of self-introspection. Why have we won this war? What are we going to do with this victory? What are we going to do with the Arabs that we occupy now? Levi Eshkol asked the Cabinet right after the conquest of the West Bank, he turns to his Cabinet and says, have any of you thought how we're going to rule over two million Arabs, quote, unquote.

Peter Robinson: You have this lovely phrase that after the 1967 war, Israel is and I quote this nice phrase, "an established fact." After the '67 war it's clear to anybody who's thinking that the Israelis are not going to be driven into the sea, that the Arab demagoguery is just that or propaganda, this phrase of driving the Jews into the sea. It's just not going to happen. Israel's there. Question is, what do the Arabs learn from it? And if it is the case that after '67, Israel is an established fact, why is it that Yasser Arafat is still using that same phrase today about driving the Jews into the sea. I don't quite understand.

Michael Oren: The Arabs learned several things.

Peter Robinson: All right.

Michael Oren: And different Arabs learned different things. The Arab world in general learns that by conventional military means, this state is not going to disappear.

Peter Robinson: It's there.

Michael Oren: It's there. All right. Perhaps by unconventional means or perhaps by other means. And I think that's what Arafat is talking to. He's talking about other means. He's talking about overriding or undermining Israel demographically, not militarily.

Peter Robinson: Okay.

Michael Oren: That's part of the code of what the Palestinians call the right of return. If you return--if you repatriate four million Palestinian refugees to the Jewish state, it is not a Jewish state anymore and it's Israeli only in name. It's a de facto Palestinian state. But having said that, the Palestinians reach a conclusion. Let's talk about individual Arabs and how they react to the '67 war. The Palestinians really don't play a very big role in the '67 war because they were not politically, diplomatically organized to do so. They attached their hopes to Gamal Abdel-Nasser. But when Nasser fails, this creates a tremendous trauma for the Palestinians. And they are forced to look upon themselves. If we want to regain our homeland, we cannot pin our hopes on somebody else. We have to do it ourselves. And it's not by accident that one year later, 1968, the PLO emerges under Arafat as this prominent--permanent force in Arab politics. It's not by accident. It's not by accident that that year they enact the Palestine National Charter.

Peter Robinson: So the '67 war gives birth to the PLO, as we now know it?

Michael Oren: As we know it. It had existed before as an Egyptian puppet organization. It had no power. After '67, it had tremendous power. By 1972, the Arab League recognizes it as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians.

Peter Robinson: What do the Israelis learn?

Michael Oren: Israelis learn a number of things. Some of them are good lessons. Some of them are bad. Some of the Israelis come to put a little bit too much faith in the force of arms. All right. The Sampson comes to outweigh the nerd a little bit too much. The Israelis also learn that if they show force of arms, they will acquire a new friend. And one of the big transformations of the Six Day War is the emergence of the U.S./Israel strategic relationship, which didn't exist before then.

Peter Robinson: So you mean to say that Dean Rusk and Lyndon Baines Johnson look at Israel as an asset after the '67 war?

Michael Oren: For the first time and not as a liability.

Peter Robinson: Last topic, lessons of the Six Day War for American policy in the Middle East today.

## **In Too Deep?**

Peter Robinson: What lessons should the United States have learned and, in particular, what can we learn from what took place in 1967 that's of relevance today?

Michael Oren: The basic lesson of the '67 war is to recall that the '67 war does not break out as a result of rational decision-making by Arab and Israeli leaders. It breaks out because you have this context of conflict that we talked about. Anything could set that off. A number of factors set it off in '67. And then if you don't intervene forcibly as the superpower, then things can get out of hand very, very quickly. I'll give you just an example of how I think you should be involved. A little bit over a year ago, there was a terrorist attack in Netanya, the Passover massacre, the Seder, remember that?

Peter Robinson: Right.

Michael Oren: The next day the Israeli Army moved into the West Bank, Operation Defensive Shield. Hezbollah in Lebanon began to shell northern Israel. Israel began to shell Hezbollah back. The Syrian Army went on alert. The Iraqi Army began to move toward the Jordanian border. All right. Everybody's going on high alert. It's 1967 all over again. Here's a situation that's quickly getting out of hand but unlike President Johnson who stood back and wouldn't intervene forcibly, the Bush Administration sent Colin Powell to Damascus and Colin Powell told Bashar al-Assad if you don't rein in Hezbollah, we're going to sic the Israelis on you. And Hezbollah stopped firing immediately and the entire crisis was diffused.

Peter Robinson: Because of American intervention?

Michael Oren: Because American intervention.

Peter Robinson: Are you optimistic--there's a new Palestinian Prime Minister, Yasser Arafat is 75 as I recall and reports that he's in failing health, Ariel Sharon has said he wants to make peace. He's not going to run for Prime Minister again. George W. Bush is engaged--is this an optimistic moment or just one more effort to keep the whole thing moving along to jaw-jaw instead of war-war?

Michael Oren: Let me say that I believe that this is not about Ariel Sharon, not about Abu Mazen, not about Arafat. All right. If Ariel Sharon were to be incapacitated tomorrow, then his successor would have exactly the same policies. And I believe that Arafat by any other name would still be Arafat because he represents a major share of Palestinian opinion. This is about two people. It's about Israelis and Palestinians. And until you have a mutual recognition that there is such a thing as a Jewish people and there is such a thing as a Palestinian people, I think the Israelis already recognize that there is such a thing as a Palestinian people--unless you have that mutual recognition and a mutual readiness to share this country, then you will not have peace.

Peter Robinson: Are you encouraged by what you see now?

Michael Oren: I am not discouraged by what I see now but...

Peter Robinson: I give up. I'm going to stop asking. I've tried five ways.

Michael Oren: But let me say this, none of these issues are trivial. None of them are free of tremendous dangers and pitfalls but I'm an historian and I recall all the time that less than two hundred years ago, the normal relationship between two Western European countries was one of war. And it wasn't until the Congress of Vienna that they got around to thinking hey maybe we should have peace with one another. Sixty years ago, World War II, the Europeans were still massacring each other. We don't know what the Middle East will look like 40, 50 years from now. Something tells me that there has to be some type of change in this area because right now it's a failed area and that like Europe, the Middle East will progress beyond the era where the normal state of relationship between peoples is one of war, toward one of peace.

Peter Robinson: Michael Oren, thank you very much. I'm Peter Robinson, for Uncommon Knowledge, thanks for joining us.

Six Days of War Questions:

1. Describe the events that led up to the Six-Day War  
in Egypt:  
  
in Syria:
2. What dilemma did King Hussein of Jordan face?
3. What are the results of Israel's campaign against Egypt?
4. What territory does Israel capture at the end of this war?