Arab Israeli Conflict Essay, Research Paper

History Coursework: Assignment 2- The Arab Israeli Conflict 1.

The author in source A appears to take a relatively neutral view in commenting on which side caused the war. Doing so he has looked at both how Israel caused it and how the Arabs caused it, thus leading to the conclusion that neither side caused the war. The author shows the Israelis felt that they had to go to war because they were ‘too small and vulnerable´. The source mentions that the Israelis felt under threat from Arab aggression and feared for their own existence, thus giving the Israeli´s the excuse that the Arabs were to blame for them releasing their pre-emptive strike. However, the author also gives us the view that Israel went to war so as to save its economy and to keep political stability. Also it mentions that Israel knew that by going to war it would bring in money from the USA and also cure the unemployment problem. This therefore gives the suggestion that the Arab aggression that was feared by Israel was just an excuse to go to a war that would boost Israel´s economy and power. As a result the author has just stated the opinions of both sides and not his own view. The fact he does give both views suggests that both side are to blame for starting the war. 2.

Source B is from an Arab Newspaper and shows Israel being surrounded by Arab states. Cannons represent these Arab states and this shows that the Arabs are being aggressive towards Israel. In the cartoon is an Israeli and this is Israeli is being forced out along a blank towards the sea by the Arab cannons. This is therefore showing both that the Arabs want to get rid of Israel from ‘their´ land and also the problem faced by Israel. It shows that Israelis were under severe threat to their existence as a nation and with their backs to the sea had no other option than to release a pre-emptive attack. The cartoon is therefore saying that the Arab people want rid of the Jewish Israelis, implementing them for being the aggressors and leaving Israel having to attack first due to their vulnerable position. 3.

These sources certainly suggest that other countries must take some of the blame for the 1967 War. Source C should be relatively unbiased as it is from a British magazine, which is a neutral country. This cartoon suggests that there was trouble ‘brewing´ in the Middle East but that both USA and USSR contributed to concocting the troubles and used the Middle East to show their power and influence. However the fact that the source is a cartoon means that their actual influences and role are exaggerated, which means that it is impossible to say that USA and USSR are solely to blame. Source D blames the failure to act by the League of Nations. However it is impossible to blame the war on the removal of UN troops because if there were no other factors then the war would not have started. The UN troops were there for maintaining peace in an area that was in high tension so obviously their withdrawal made it easier for war to start but we cannot say that the war would not have started when they were there because the tension between the two sides was growing. Another limitation to both sources, especially source D, is that they were from after the war and so they aren´t reliable in showing what the Arab and Israeli leaders felt at the time. Both sources put partial blame on other countries for causing the war but the limitations with dates and provenance and the fact we know that there were other dimensions not mentioned make it impossible to say that other countries caused the war. 4.

Source E claims that the Israeli´s are to blame for causing the war due to their constant acts of aggression towards Syria and its Arab people under the urging and

backing of USA. By comparing this source with sources F and G it is clear that there are two conflicting Arab views. These two sources both show that the Arabs felt strong hatred towards Israel and declare that they want to see the destruction of the Israeli sate. This is saying that the Arabs were being aggressive towards Israel but source E puts the blame on Israeli acts of aggression. These sources do probably show that Source E is false because they are from one year before and from the start of the war and should be reliable in showing the Arab view because they are messages to the Arab people. The claim that Israel are the aggressors is therefore probably wrong because two more reliable views from the same side disprove it and also Source E has several limitations to it. It is made by the deputy commander of the Egyptian army to his people and so is overtly biased because the commander will be using the speech as propaganda to motivate his troops by blaming Israel, so as the International community hears that Egypt are going to war so as to protect Syria, thus making sure that the International community doesn´t go against them. Source E is propaganda and so isn´t the true view of the Arabs which is shown by the other sources which show Arab aggression. 5. Both these sources are of some use. Source H is useful for a historian because it is what an Israeli felt at the time. It should therefore be useful as his fears should be genuine and reliable and therefore why he went to war is reliable and of use to. It is useful in showing the Israeli situation of being poorly defended and vulnerable to attack so as the best form of defence would be to trigger the war by releasing a pre-emptive attack. Source I can be used to say that one of the causes of the war was the tension and aggression between Israel and Egypt because this is where the photograph shows where the fighting is and that a pre-emptive and surprise attack was released because so much destruction to Egyptian tanks is shown. Also the fact that Israel is attacking the Sinai desert suggests that one cause of the war is that they want to recapture land there.

However the usefulness of these sources suffers because of their limitations. Source H is unreliable because it was written after the event and we don´t know how long afterwards exactly. Writing afterwards could result in how he thought he felt changing. Also source H only shows one cause and so is not useful in showing all the causes of the War. There are severe limitations of Source I. It is very blurred and relies on a possibly biased caption to explain it, which means that it could be exaggerated. Also one picture is not enough to draw reliable conclusions because it is only a snap shot of what happened and so cannot be trusted in showing the true situation even on the Sinai front. 6.

There are many ways in which these interpretations of the causes of the Six Day War differ. Source J shows the Israeli government´s excuse and is therefore biased on the Israeli side. It blames Arab terrorism and aggression and Soviet disinformation for causing the war and puts sole blame on them. Source K gives the Egyptian and therefore probably Arab view of who caused the war and like Source J is overtly biased. As the Israeli´s did, this source claims that the war was in fact caused by the opposition and so puts the blame on Israeli hostility and control of foreign media. Quite clearly these interpretations of the causes differ as they are from both sides and so blame each other. There are though similarities between the sources. Both are secondary sources and are books produced by the state for others to read thus suggesting they are propaganda, being used to show innocence to international community. Therefore both have limitations to reliability. 7.

Using these sources and contextual knowledge it is difficult to put sole blame on one country for causing the Six Day war. This is because the sources and contextual knowledge, when corroborated, lead to different conclusions and so contradict each other. Sources B, F, G and J all indicate that the Arab nations are to blame for causing the war. They say that the Arab Nations showed continuous signs of aggression through acts of terrorism and speeches made and this therefore would´ve caused the Israeli´s to release a pre-emptive attack. However there are several problems with these sources in terms of validity and reliability. Sources B, F and G are said or done by an Arab to its people and so would be biased. Source B is unreliable because it is a cartoon aimed at the Arab people and so will be for propaganda. Source J would be unreliable because an Israeli tells it after the war and this could be because Israel is trying to explain itself and put the blame on the Arabs in front of the international community. Sources F and G are said by Arab Leaders to their people and so again are overtly biased and are also contradicted by the Egyptian deputy commander-in-chief in Source E. This disagreement between people of the same side clearly shows that one of them is lying and that the Arabs aren´t telling the whole truth. It is more likely that source E, which blames Israel for starting the war is more unreliable because it is a speech designed for the international community and so is biased so as to make them the Arabs look good. However source K also blames Israel for being responsible for the war as it mention show Israel was being hostile to her neighbours and had ulterior motives because going to war would improve the economy and employment. This source, although it matches what is said by E is again unreliable because other Arab sources clearly indicate Arab aggression and also it is a biased source because it is in book to be seen by the international community.

The sources C and D and K claim that the USA, USSR and are responsible for the war. They suggest that the USA and USSR were using the Middle East as a place to show off their power and support and to use the area as a battlefield for them to cause trouble. It is also claimed that the mistake made by the removal of UN troops from the buffer zone in Israeli sparked off the war. However it is impossible to say that either source is correct because both have limitations. Neither source when corroborated has another source with the same conclusion and so is unreliable. Also source C is a cartoon which is often exaggerated whilst D, which was written several years after the war will not have how both sides felt at the actual time.

Using contextual knowledge and these sources it is probably best to say what is said in source A that both sides are to blame and that the war was inevitable due to both long-term and short-term causes. We know that Israel fired the first short on the actual break out of war but before this there was Arab aggression thus forcing them to release their pre-emptive attack. We also know that there had been a history of conflict between both sides and so it is hard to blame one particular side for causing this war. This is also because the sources contradict each other and so it is best to say that there are several causes of the war including the part other factors such as the UN and USSR played. 8.

There are many reasons why there is disagreement over who caused the Six Day war. A main problem is that all the sources are problematic. They all have their merits to show who caused the war but are also unreliable and have technical limitations. The sources often contradict each other and this is because we hear the biased view of both sides. Sources A, B, F, G and J blame the Arab aggression for causing the war. This is contradicted by sources A, E, and K which blame Israeli ulterior motives and attacks on Syria whilst sources C, D and K blame other factors such as the USSR, USA and the UN thus leading to confusion on who is really to blame. Even sources from the same side (e.g. sources E, F and G) say different things making them difficult to believe which is true and who is to blame. Each source comes down in a different direction giving a slightly different conclusion for what caused the war. With all these different views and the limitations to them it is impossible to believe which one is true thus causing problems on who caused the war. The majority of the sources are biased in favour of one country and the neutral sources are from years after the war thus giving time for facts and opinions to alter from the actual event. Clearly the unreliability in the sources makes them severely limited in showing what caused the war. Also by using contextual knowledge we know that there had been a history of violence between the sides making it hard to work out who would´ve wanted to attack most. Israel was motivated by Arab aggression and the desire to recapture land taken back from them in the previous war whilst the Arabs believed that the land was stolen from them by the Jews and they wanted revenge for previous defeats. Also there is the view that other dimensions such as the UN, USSR and USA are to blame and so there is confusion on whether or not one factor is to blame and also which of the causes are actually true.