

Why Didn't Israel Withdraw from the Territory It Gained During the Six Day War?

Following the end of the Six Day War there was great debate within Israel about what to do with the territories gained during the war, which included East [Jerusalem](#), the [West Bank](#), [Gaza Strip](#), the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights.

Some in Israel advocated an immediate withdrawal from the territories. Others supported a withdrawal only in exchange for peace with the surrounding Arab countries. And some, euphoric over the reunification of Jerusalem and control over Judaism's holiest sites in the West Bank, advocating keeping the land.

On June 19, [Israel's cabinet met](#) and agreed to send to the United States the following offer: "Israel proposes reaching peace with Egypt [and with Syria] on the basis of the international border and the security requirements of Israel."

The Arab countries did not respond until the Arab League met in Khartoum on September 1. The League pledged to demand Israel's withdrawal from territories captured, guided by what is known as the "3 nos": no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel. The Arab League's unequivocal stance shut down any hope of a negotiated Israeli withdrawal in return for peace.

However, just over a decade later, in 1979 Israel signed a [peace agreement with Egypt](#) in a [land-for-peace](#) arrangement which included Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai.

In 1981, Israel officially annexed the Golan Heights which extended Israeli law and administration over the area. Over the past two decades, reports have revealed

some secret Israeli-Syrian negotiations (none successful) that reportedly included discussion over the status of the Golan.

The status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip remains uncertain and more complicated 50 years after the 1967 war. Since the [Oslo Accords of 1993](#), there have been negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians based on principle of land-for-peace, with borders between Israel and an independent Palestinian state to be determined as part of a final status agreement. Israel has made numerous land-for-peace offers to the Palestinians, including during the 2000 Camp David summit, involving a near-total withdrawal of Israel from the West Bank. Those offers have been repeatedly turned down by Palestinian leaders.

In 2005, Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip and withdrew Israeli civilians and military forces from the area, handing control of the territory off to the Palestinian Authority. In 2007, Hamas violently overthrew the PA in Gaza, and currently rules over the area, although its borders are controlled by Egypt and Israel.