CHAPTER: III

CONFLICT OVER RIVER WATERS:
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Control over water resources of the Jordan River has been the most contentious issue among the frontline, Arab States on the one hand and Israel on the other. Facing acute water scarcity, the state of Israel ever since its establishment, has sought to acquire a major portion of the waters of the Jordan. Having faced perpetual hostility from its Arab neighbours, Israel considers the control over water supply as a strategic instrument and defensive technique that greatly affects regional balance of power.

Predictably, the Israeli policy has generated a lot of tension as riparian states have opposed Israel's attempts to control the waters of the River Jordan. The absence of precise international rules and regulations governing the sharing of waters of international river has further compounded the problem. The issue has become further complicated as its has become inextricably linked to the Palestinian problem.

1. HYDROPOLITICS OF THE JORDAN RIVER

Confronting Israeli threats to Arab water is not confined to a single Arab State. After the end of the First World War, the Zionist submitted their demands regarding Palestinian borders, to the Peace Conference and suggested that these borders start from a point on the Mediterranean Sea north of the mouth of the Litani, extending eastward to include all the sources feeding the Jordan River.¹ Weizmann, the Zionist leader, had sent a letter to Lord Curzon, then British Foreign secretary on October 30, 1920 in which he made it clear that there was a Zionist demand for the annexation of Lebanese and Jordanian lands.² Israel has incorporated defense consideration into the foundation

of the country by the establishment of agricultural settlement for security purposes. Since the early days of Zionism the Jewish settlements in Palestine were not viewed solely as economic enterprises or a way of life for their members, but were considered also as outposts spearheading or consolidating the Zionist conquest of the country. The Jewish-Arab War and the humiliation that the Arab armies suffered at the hands of the Israelis has played an important role in moulding the thinking of the Arab World. The war drove about one million Arabs out of their homes. They left from fear of Zionist reprisals and the terror of destruction of their homes and families.

The impact of Arab-Israeli politics on the Jordan River conflict reveals only in part of some of the reasons for Arab rejection of any cooperation with Israel in developing the Jordan waters. The waters of the Jordan are vital to Jordan, the West Bank, Israel and the areas in Syria and Lebanon where some of the rivers of the basin rise. Dividing these waters, estimated at about 1,500 MCMY and fluctuating from one year to the next, has been a nettlesome issue from the onset of Zionist colonization of Palestine.

A major feature of Israeli water project was irrigation of the Negev and its articulated policy in the context of water. Yet Israel feels that water resources for it requirements are insufficient. The Jordan Negev water line constitutes the back bone of Israeli defense plans and thereby represents the hydropolitical nature of Israeli water project. As the Israeli bureaucrats suggested, "the main controlling factors in the planning of the Israeli National Water Project are the dispersal of settlements throughout the length and breadth of the state for political and security reasons." Israel persisted in her plans to irrigate the Negev by diverting the Jordan River out of the watershed area to the desert. This was the major feature of the National Water Carrier Project. The first stage of this project was started almost immediately after the Armistice agreement of 1949 and it gave Israel a partial access to the headwaters of the Jordan.

In September 1953, Syria brought the case to the United Nations Security Council

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3. Ibid., p.189.
and the seriousness of the matter was soon apparent to the world body. Consequently, the United Nation in cooperation with the United States decided that the unilateral plan of each party should be rejected, in favour of regional development of the Jordan River basin. During the period of Eisenhower in 1953, Jorda River water development became an important aspect of US foreign policy in West Asia. The US presented a proposal to both the Arabs and Israel for the development of the Jordan basin. This proposal came to be known as the Unified Plan. In 1955 Eric Johnston, special envoy of the US set out on his visit to West Asia to help the Arabs and Israelis achieve an understanding on sharing the waters of the Jordan. The Kingdom of Jordan was the first country Johnston visited between 25 to 30 August, 1955 because he saw it as the key Arab country which stood to benefit most from the project. After several rounds of discussion the Americans finally managed to persuade the Jordanians to agree to the compromise plan. By the end of September 1955 the individual Arab countries had all approved the 'Draft Memorandum of Understanding' and the Arab League Technical Committee recommended it to the Arab League's Political Committee. After four days of deliberation the Arab League's Political Committee decided not to ratify the Unified Plan.

The Arab rejection was basically a political decision and not a technical one. In Syria a new radical government had just come to office and it feared that the opposition groups would force it out of office if it showed the slightest softening of attitude towards Israel. Damascus, also, had little economic incentive to develop the Jordan Valley as it had access to the waters of Euphrates river. Egypt too, under Nasir, was not willing to give any concessions to Israel as this could be interpreted as weakness on the part of the Arab resolve to eradicate the Jewish State.

With the Arab rejection of the Johnston Plan a multilateral approach to Jordan water development and management thus failed. Meanwhile the Israeli Water Authori-
ties, Tahal engineers and Directors, Mekorot engineers, and special consultants acted together to plan and later execute the National Water Carrier Project. The project consists of a main conduit 105 kilometres long, beginning at Eshed Kinrot on the northwestern shore of Lake Tiberias, where the water is lifted over 250 meters by pumping. The water then travels over 65km via canal and tunnel to the Izalmon pumping station and from there to the operational reservoir at Beit Netofa in the Lower Galilee, where it passes 8km through Shimron, MenasheA, MenashaB tunnels in the Galilee and Menashe Hills. From there the water travels 80km via 108inch diameter pipeline, along the coast, to interconnect with all the smaller reservoir especially that of the Yarkon, at Tel Aviv until it ends in the northern Negev. The total amount of water to be diverted from the Jordan Yarmuk system, according to Israeli authorities will not exceed the amount of water allocated to Israel under the Unified Plan.

Israel remained determined, with or without Arab cooperation, to divert part of the Jordan river waters for irrigation. Consequently in 1956 the National Water Carrier Project for irrigating the Negev was approved and work began in 1958. In early 1958 the East Ghor Canal project was announced, and the United States—after satisfying herself that Jordan would tacitly adhere to the Johnston formula—granted the Kingdom a $4 million grant through the Agency for International Development to complete it. In the early 1960's the Technical Committee of the Arab League formalized a plan to build a dam on the Hasbani relaying its water to the Litani via a tunnel, and to divert the Baniyas southwards to the Yarmuk.

In 1964, the construction was finally started for a dam on the Yarmuk and for diversion of the headwaters of Jordan. After Israel started test pumpings in May, a second Arab Summit Conference was called at Alexandria in September 1964 at which it was decided to build a dam on the Yarmuk at Mukheiba to store water diverted from the Baniyas and Hasbani. With the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War of June 1967,

12. Cited in Sara Kegeuer, One of the best description of the Project is to be found in Tahal, Summary of Consultations on the Jordan Negev System (Tel Aviv, 1991).
work on the Project of diverting River Hasbani and on implementing the proposed plan for irrigation came to a halt.\textsuperscript{16}

During the 1967 War, Israel captured the Golan Height from Syria. The Golan Heights, itself has little water resources to offer except the Baniyas river a small tributary of the Jordan. Israeli water strategy has been at the heart of its campaign to retain permanent control of the Golan, since it would assure protection of Israel's Lake Tiberias pumping works. More important, control of the Golan Heights enables Israel to preempt any Syrian or multilateral Arab effort to divert the Upper Jordan back to Arab territory or to develop Yarmuk.\textsuperscript{17} In addition Israel has occupied the northern bank to the Yarmuk River boundary between Syria and Jordan, opposite the intake tunnels to Jordan's East Ghor Canal. Had Israel seized the Hasbani in 1967 it would have completed the job of securing the source of Jordan river. With the Dan river inside Israel proper, and the Baniyas captured in June 1967 by Israeli, only the Hasbani lay beyond Israel's grasp.\textsuperscript{18}

In the changed scenario, and early in 1972 the Jordanian government formed a committee composed of representatives from various related ministries and departments, to formulate a comprehensive three year plan for the rehabilitation and development of the area. To coordinate and implement various schemes envisaged, a special law was passed early in 1973 setting up the Jordan Valley commission which was soon elevated to the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) headed by a president of ministerial rank.\textsuperscript{19}

In 1987, Jordan and Syria decided on a project to share the run off waters of the Yarmuk River. The plan was initiated by Jordan for which the West bank was expected to provide funds from Israel. The Israelis demand was to participate in the planning, construction and administration of the dam. Basically Israel wanted a share of any additional water that would come as a result of the project. Israel also wanted to pre-

\textsuperscript{17} Farid Abdel Majeed, \textit{Israel and Arab Waters} (London : Ithaca Press, 1985), pp.54-55.
\textsuperscript{19} Sara Reguer, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.76.
vent the Jordanians from doing any thing that would block off water to Israel.²⁰

Water was a prominent factor at the West Asian Peace talks which began in Madrid in 1991. In subsequent rounds of peace negotiation among different parties, held in Moscow, Vienna and Washington, little headway could be made over the problem of sharing water resources of the region. Syria and Lebanon were unwilling to discuss any issue relating to water until Israel withdrew from the occupied territories. As water is crucial to the survival of the Jewish State, Israel needs to control the Yarkon-Taninim reservoirs which are located on the West Bank. If these sources are handed over to Palestine, it would sharply reduce the water availability in Israel and would make the latter dependent on the emerging Palestine entity.²¹ When negotiation began the Palestinians started claiming their right to water, and reallocation of supplies. The Israeli government was unwilling to give major concessions. While it agreed that the Palestinians could use little more water, it refused to give up over all control. The Israeli water commissioner was in favour of cooperative use of unused resources and the production of additional water by building desalination plant and coordination of effort to control water degradation problem. Israel stated, if a Palestinian state comes into existence, Israel must control the 2-6km wide hill ridge in the Anabta region since most of the source of ground water are found in the region.²² In the Vienna round of multilateral negotiations held in May 1992, the Jordanians, Palestinians and Israelis agreed to cooperate and exchange data on water resources. The Jordanian condition was such that, water utilization must be user-related and accord should seek to move from a position of disparity to equitable allocation of water.²³ In May 1993 the third round of multilateral negotiation were held in Washington. A working group on water resources has met seven times, since then which was set up in Washington. In September 1995 an interim agreement was signed wherein, for the first time, the Palestinians were accorded a right to West Bank ground water. The accord also setup a joint Israeli-Pales-

²³ Ibid. p.24.
tinian committee to manage water affairs in the West Bank. 24

The absence of Syria and Lebanon from the talks has effectively limited the number of areas of potential cooperation and thwarted hopes that full and all encompassing cooperation among the riparian states of the Jordan basin would be developed. In addition, the varying concerns of the regional participants and their differing expectation of this process have burdened the discussion and impeded greater breakthroughs. In particular, much of the discussion, especially in the early rounds, floundered over the inclusion of water rights as an agenda item. Israel has sought to separate the technical and political aspects of the water issue, regarding the primary object of this working group as to focus solely on technical issues and joint water management, with the aim of increasing the overall supply of water within the region. The formulation of solution to the problems of water supply, in the Israeli view, requires the development of a range of functional and technical links between regional experts and officials. The construction of these links should not be impeded by the discussion of water rights and shares which, for Israel, is essentially political issue and therefore should be confined to the bilateral negotiations. 25

Some progress has been achieved despite fundamental differences, essentially because the Israeli position on the appropriate fora for the discussion of water rights has prevailed. The water working group has confined its activities to developing strategies for managing and increasing the supply of water in the region, and has concentrated its efforts on identifying the appropriate methods to supply adequate water to growing population at an affordable cost. To this end, the parties have focused upon four broad themes, adopted at the first plenary meeting in Vienna, as the starting points for discussion and potential cooperation; (1) enhancement of data availability (2) water management and conservation; (3) enhancement of water supply; and (4) concepts of regional cooperation and management.

In the course of these talks, the parties have become increasingly aware of the need to translate their deliberation into identifiable achievements and move towards

the implementation of specific projects.\textsuperscript{26}

2. ISRAEL'S POLICY TOWARDS LITANI RIVER

The Litani, which is in the South of Lebanon has been a major source of friction between the Republic of Lebanon and the State of Israel. The sharing of water of the Litani River has always remained at the centre of a controversy between the two. Though the Litani is a wholly national river, for a water scarce Israel, it has always been a source of great attraction. Time and again, Israel has made repeated attempts to acquire a portion of the Litani's water but with little success. The Israeli water policy is throughout linked with the expansionist and colonialist policy.

During the course of fighting in 1948, Israel was interested in the transfer of water of Litani into Jordan Basin. Annexing Southern Lebanon and the seizure of the Litani water were frequently discussed in Israel cabinet meetings. The Israel-Lebanese Mixed Armistice Commission had been established in 1949. It had very little work to do as the Israeli-Lebanese border, in marked contrast to the Israeli-Syrian or Israeli-Egyptian border, was so quite. However, all this changed due to the six day war of 1967.

(i) AFTERMATH OF JUNE 1967 WAR

The 1967 war extended the length of the Israeli-Lebanese border by about twelve miles, due to the advance of Israeli forces into the Golan Heights. Israeli also occupied the Sinai, Gaza and West Bank during the June 1967 War. Following the War, there was an influx of Palestinian refugees into the south of Lebanon. These refugees soon got organized under the Palestine Liberation Army and stepped up guerilla activities against Israel.\textsuperscript{27}

At first the Lebanese government objected to guerilla activities but support for the Palestinians was strong among the Lebanese muslims. Under pressure from the Lebanese muslims the Lebanese government was forced to sign an agreement with the PLO in 1969 giving it certain rights in Lebanon. This agreement is known as the Cairo

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Ibid., p. 18.
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Agreement. According to its terms which were supposed to be kept “secret” the Lebanese Army agreed to allow the Palestinian guerillas free access to Syrian supply lines and relaxed restrictions previously placed on the refugees camps. It legitimized the right of the PLO to maintain centres in Lebanon. No other Arab Government had ever agreed to such an arrangement before. The Cairo agreement therefore caused considerable alarm in Israel. Due to the strong internal and external support to the guerillas, the Government of Lebanon found it difficult to control Palestinian guerilla operations against Israel from Lebanese territory. In retaliation Israel initiated a series of raids against the Palestinians and the local Lebanese Shi’ite population in the south. These raids created extreme insecurity in the South and led to considerable loss of life and property. On 6th March 1970 Israeli Northern District Commander, Major General Mordechai Gur, warned that it would turn a six miles stretch of Southern Lebanon bordering Israel into a scorched-earth desert. On 15th October 1972, Israel launched air attacks against Palestinian bases in Lebanon. It was announced that it would no longer wait for commando acts or terrorist incidents before striking targets in Lebanon. The presence of terrorists in the area between the border and the Litani River is a provocation, so Israel is free to act against them. In the long run the Israeli raids were instrumented in the break down of the Lebanese political system and onset of Civil War in 1975. The civil war resulted in widespread physical destruction, and the collapse of the country’s fragile political system. The war started as a confrontation between the Maronite militia, eager to restrict or eliminate the troublesome Palestinian presence in Lebanon, and the Fedayeen. The civil war provided an opportunity to Israel to surreptitiously implement its long standing scheme with regard to the Litani. In South of Lebanon it quietly setup a Christian militia which was to act as a surrogate of the Israeli Army.

In early 1976, as it became apparent that Syria was about to intervene in the civil war because of its close military ties with the PLO, Israel prepared for a major military deployment, which was to involve 30,000 troops. It was clear that Syria was not likely to invade on its own; the risk of starting a war that would draw the U.S. into it was unacceptable to the Syrian government. However, a showdown was inevitable, and Israel prepared for it.”

28. For the Text of the Agreement See *Al-Nahar*, 20 April 1970 Cited in *Arab World*, 20 April 1970. *Al-Nahar* for the first time published the full text of the Cairo Agreement which through the Minister of Information Would not Concede it was Apparently Authentic. *Al-Nahar* was Prosecuted by the Government for having Published the Agreement.


30. See *Arab Weekly*, June 1972, pp.1-3 and see also Sobel, Ibid., p.144.
war, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin announced a red line in Lebanon, South of which the Syrain forces would not be permitted to move. The location of the line was not clear but it was widely presumed that “red line” was the lower course of the Litani River, as it flows in a westerly direction towards the sea across most of South Lebanon.\(^{31}\)

On 19 July 1976 Defense Minister Shimon Peres announced a new Israeli policy. It was know as the ‘good fence’ programme. The good fence programme had three aspects: humanitarian relief for the beleaguered residents of Southern Lebanese border Villages; the restriction of all non-Lebanese military forces from the southern area; the third aspect of the good fence programme was the creation of a pro-Israeli Southern Lebanese militia to aid in barring the reintroduction of Fedayeen commandos. This militia was headed by a renegade, Lebanese armed forces personal Major Saad Haddad.\(^{32}\)

In February 1977 Severe fighting broke out South Lebanon, as Haddad’s rightist militia attacked Palestinian and Lebanese leftist position in the villages of Kafr Tibnit and Ibil as Saqy, north of Israel’s Hula Valley. Since July 1977, attacks and counterattacks continued with Israel.\(^{33}\)

(ii) ISRAEL’S INVASION OF LEBANON: LITANI OPERATION

On 11th March, 1978 eleven Palestinian terrorists arrived by sea into northern Israel, a point 30 kilometres south of Haifa. They killed a woman strolling along the beach and seized an Israeli bus near the Tel-Aviv highway. In the resulting confrontation 35 passengers were killed and a number of people wounded. The incident of 11 March sent a wave of outrage throughout Israel. A massive Israeli response was inevitable. Although the entire world recognized the inevitability of a super-retaliation against Lebanon, the scope and intensity of the Israeli operation which commenced three days later took everyone by surprise. Just before dawn on 14th March, Israeli artillery opened up on Lebanese villages held by the Palestinians and leftists.\(^{34}\) The shelling was followed by a

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ground attack with approximately 20,000 Israeli soldiers advancing on five axes.\textsuperscript{35} The Israeli forces consisted mainly of regular infantry and paratroopers units.\textsuperscript{36} According to Ezer Weizmann the operation and plans worked out by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were to operate against Palestinian terrorists and their bases all along the Lebanese-Israeli border up to a distance of 10 km inside Lebanon. The original objective of the invasion was achieved in the first day itself. The whole area along the border to a depth of 10 km inside Lebanon was occupied by the IDF. As the Israeli forces moved towards north, Haddad’s militia followed in their wake, looting the Shi’ite villages which had successfully held out for so long.\textsuperscript{37}

On 19 March, just when it seemed that the operation was coming to an end, the IDF suddenly broke out of the buffer zone towards the Litani River, and by evening Israel controlled the entire area from its borders to the Litani river except for the town of Tyre. According to an Israeli source, the new advance was designed to carve out a PLO-free security belt in the 1200 square kilometres between Israel’s northern border and the Litani River. In reality, however, it was international politics that had played the crucial role in the decision to expand the operation.

On 15 March, the Lebanese government launched a complaint to the UN Security Council and the following day the US gave a call for an immediate Israeli withdrawal. On the same day the US proposed before the UN that the Israeli forces at present in Lebanon be immediately replaced by a UN force. When the US resolutely pushed for a UN Security Council resolution calling for an Israeli withdrawal and the despatch of UN troops to South Lebanon, the Israeli government was taken by surprise. The Israeli thrust towards the Litani was, therefore, seen by many as an attempt to achieve the maximum possible before the vote on the proposed UN Security Council Resolution. This would increase the area, the Israeli government could trade with the UN and leave manoeuvring room to fall back on all the way to its recently created security belt.\textsuperscript{38} Given the size and intensity of the Israeli operation, it is obvious that Tel Aviv’s deci-

\textsuperscript{35} Hirsh Goodman, "Israel Focus Holding Southern Lebanon" \textit{op.cit.}, p.7.
\textsuperscript{36} It was at this Stage that the Name of the Invasion was Changed from 'Stone of Wisdom' to Operation Litani. Anan Safardi, \textit{Jerusalem Post Magazine} (7 April 1978), p.4.
\textsuperscript{37} Walid Khalid, \textit{Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East} (Harvard, 929), p.130.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., pp125-26.
sion to invade Lebanon was not a spontaneous reaction to a particularly gruesome incident of Palestinian terrorism but had been made much before the incident of 11 March. The three days gap between the Palestinian raid and the invasion gave the PLO sufficient time to move its forces to buffer zones in the north. A liquidation strategy would have called for surprise seizure of the Litani by amphibian and helicopter-borne troops to cut off the PLO forces lines of retreat. The IDF also abandoned its traditional strategy of high mobility, preferring instead to advance its mechanized infantry very cautiously behind a devastating wall of casualties. It maximized non-combatant deaths and civil destruction and permitted the great bulk of enemy commandos to cross the Litani River to relative safety. Finally, the IDF’s treatment of Tyre also was at variance with the declared Israeli objective of liquidating the PLO.

(iii) A REVIEW OF UNIFIL’S ROLE PRECEDINGS JUNE 1982 INVASION

On 19th March 1978, hours after the IDF had began to move towards the Litani, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 425. The two key points of the resolution which was sponsored by the US, were (i) a call upon Israel to immediately “cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw its forces from all Lebanese territory,” and (ii) the establishment of a United Nations Interim Force for Southern Lebanon for the purpose of “confirming the withdraw of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the Government of Lebanon to establish effective authority in the area”. The Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizmann met with General Ensio Siilasvuo, commander of United Nation Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) and Major-General Emmanuel S.Erskine commander of the newly appointed UNIFIL. At this meeting the following point were agreed upon between Israel and the UN officer.

(i) The area run by the IDF in the second stage of the invasion would become a buffer

40. For the complete text of Resolution 425, See Arab Report and Record No.6 (16-31 March 1978), pp. 221-225.
41. Ibid., p.225.
42. The Blue Helments, A Review of UN Peace-Keeping (New York: 1985 ), Chapter IV.
zone; (ii) UNIFIL would be responsible for patrolling the buffer zone; and (iii) the strip of territory lying between the Israeli-Lebanese boundary and the UNIFIL buffer zone would be designated as a "peace zone" to be patrolled by the militia of major Haddad and units of the Lebanese army.

The first contingent of UNIFIL consisting of element of the Swedish infantry battalion entered Lebanon by way of Israel on 22 March 1978. In the months of April to June, an international force began to take up positions south of the Litani. The Israeli withdrawal called for by Resolution 425, took place very slowly and in several stages beginning on 11 April. By 30 April, Israel had turned over to UNIFIL around 550 square kilometres of Lebanese territory and was left in control of the security belt seized during the first phase of invasion (See Fig. 14). On 13 June, as promised the IDF formally ended its ninety-one day occupation of southern Lebanon. In a military ceremony at Meis al-Jabal the Israeli flag was lowered. However, the security belt occupied by the IDF was handed over not to the UNIFIL but to Haddad and his militia. Soon after the IDF withdrawal, the Lebanese government decided to despatch a army contingent to the to the south to establishment a symbolic authority as well as supplement the UNIFIL effort in policing the area.

In July 1978 when the Lebanese government decided to despatch a force of the Lebanese army to south it was bombarded by Haddad's militia and prevented from advancing beyond the town of Kawkaba. After protracted mediatory efforts, two Lebanese battalions reached southern Lebanon in 1980. They were deployed in the UNIFIL'S area of operation.

A review of UNIFIL's role makes it clear that it could not successfully implement the UN Mandate. Of course, it confirmed the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Southern Lebanon, but it could not deploy over the whole of Southern Lebanon, nor could it hand the area back to the Lebanese government. UNIFIL could not implement all of its mandate because the necessary cooperation was not forthcoming within its immediate

Ares turned over to UNIFIL on 11 April 1978
Area turned over to UNIFIL on 14 April 1978
Area turned over to UNIFIL on 30 April 1978
Area turned over to the Christian militias on 13 June 1978

Figure 1
surroundings. In fact, the Lebanese government was not in a position to impose its will effectively due to its own weakness. Israel was not interested in cooperating with the UNIFIL because from the beginning, Israel perceived that it had been imposed on it without Israel's case being heard. While the Israeli forces were still carrying out the Litani operation, the US and the UN initiated the formation of peacekeeping force without getting Israeli assent. UNIFIL, thus was formed on the basis of a unilateral Security Council decision, and not as a result of an agreement between the hostile parties. UNIFIL could not use force either against Israel or its surrogate Saad Haddad's Southern Lebanon Authority nor against the PLO. Throughout its active life from March 1978 to the Israeli Invasion of June 1982, UNIFIL constantly experienced great difficulties. (See Fig. 15)

(iv) ISRAEL'S INVASION OF LEBANON: OPERATION PEACE FOR GALILEE

In June 1982 Israel launched a massive land, sea and air invasion of Lebanon code named Mivtsa Shalom ha Galilee (Operation Peace for Galilee). At the beginning of this invasion Israeli spokesman announced that their aim was to drive the PLO beyond a line twentyfive miles from the border so that it could no longer be within PLO artillery range. Within a few days, however, the Israeli army had gone well beyond the twentyfive mile zone.

The operation was not a limited one like the March 1978 invasion. There were deeper and more fundamental objectives associated with this second Israeli invasion of Lebanon. These were (a) cruising and destroying the PLO both as a military and political force in Lebanon (b) inflicting a humiliating defeat on the Syrian army in Lebanon so as to affect its total or partial withdrawal (c) installation of Bashir Jumayil as the President of Lebanon and (d) signing a peace treaty with Lebanon. This treaty would satisfy two long-standing Israeli ambitions with regard to Lebanon. First it would accord diplomatic recognition and record it would provide effective Israeli control over

46. Jerusalem Post (7 June 1982).
48. Naff and Maston op.cit., p.76.
Israel Advances
First Ceasefire line 12.6.82
Ceasefire Line 26.6.82

Figure : 15
Source : Middle East Contemporary (ed) by Colin Legum, vol. I 1981-82
Following the 1982 invasion, Israel's hold over security zone was further consolidated. It was during the post 1982 period that Israel carried out extensive hydrological and technical studies, aimed at diverting part of the Litani's water into northern Israel. The IDF which had withdrawn to a line on the Awali river in September 1983 was soon confronted with a new challenge. The shi'ites of South rose up in revolt against the continuing Israeli occupation. In January, 1984 Haddad died of cancer. Antonie Lahad who succeeded Lahad turned Haddad's militia into a regular army. The SLA was, however, no more successful in eliciting shi'ite cooperation than earlier Israeli efforts. In 1984 there were over nine hundred attacks on the IDF in Southern Lebanon taking a heavy toll of Israeli soldiers. At the same time Israel began to isolate the south from the rest of the country by completely sealing off the bridges on the Awali river. On 18 February 1985 Prime Minister Simon Peres succeeded in getting the cabinet to approve a staged withdrawal from Lebanon. The first stage which was to be completed in five weeks envisaged an IDF withdrawal from the Sidon area to a line on the Litani. In the second stage the IDF would withdraw from the Jabal Baruk and reposition itself in the Hasbaya area. In the third and final stage the IDF would withdraw from the area between Tyre in the west and Hasbaya in the east. This phase was, however, dependent, on the ability of the SLA to take charge of the security belt. Even if the SLA proved effective, the IDF would maintain its presence in the from of advisers and intelligence installation inside Lahad's territory. This phased withdrawal was completed as per schedule. The third phase proved to be a little problematic as the SLA was unable to exhibit the required whesiveners or military process which the Israeli desired. The result was that the IDF had to come to its aid whenever the challenge from shi'its of the south mounted.

3. POLITICAL DISAGREEMENT OVER WATER RIGHTS IN THE EUPHRATES-TIGRIS BASIN

The Euphrates-Tigris rise in the mountains of the southeastern Turkey. Both are im-

49. Naff and Maston op.cit., p.76.
important international rivers, which have tremendous regional importance. Control of these rivers has become increasingly contentious, as the demand for water keeps on increasing every year, in this arid region.\textsuperscript{52} The economic prosperity of Turkey, Syria and Iraq depends on the two rivers, as they constitute the principal source of hydroelectricity and agricultural development. A proliferation of multipurpose dam projects, combined with competition for regional, political and economic leadership is a permanent source of tension in the Tigris-Euphrates basin. As an upstream state Turkey has sought to exploit water in its territory, thereby causing acute concern to its downstream neighbours. The relations between Turkey and Syria have been strained many a times, mainly due to the former's efforts to control the flow of the rivers.\textsuperscript{53}

There are no tripartite treaties between the riparian states of the Tigris-Euphrates basin in relation to the allocation or exploitation of the river waters. The treaty of Lausanne in 1923, included a provision that Turkey must consult Iraq before undertaking any hydraulic works. The 1930 treaty of Aleppo gave Syria certain water rights on the Tigris.\textsuperscript{54} An attempt was made by Turkey to conclude an agreement with Syria in connection with the use of Euphrates waters. The concessions made by Turkey were considered to be inadequate by the Syrians and the treaty could not be concluded. The two countries are also at loggerheads over Syria's claim over the Hatay province, which was ceded to Turkey in 1939.\textsuperscript{55}

The 1946 Ankara Treaty of Friendship and Good Neighbourliness, signed between Turkey and Iraq, stated that Iraq was to be consulted before Turkey carried out any development project on the Tigris-Euphrates. Although in 1962 Syria and Iraq formalized a Joint Technical Committee, however its role was limited, as no major hydraulic works were carried out during this period. In September 1965, a tripartite meeting was held in Baghdad and at this meeting, Iraq is said to have demanded 18,000 MCMY of Euphrates water, Syria 13,000 MCMY and Turkey 14,000 MCMY. In early

\textsuperscript{54} Natasha Beschomer, \textit{op.cit.}
1967 Iraqi and Syrian were very acquisitive in regard to water allocation, with Iraq demanding 16,000 MCMY from Syria and Syria insisting that Iraq needed no more than 9,000 MCMY.\textsuperscript{56}

Due to the inability of the three riparian states to reach formal agreement to share water the 1970's witnessed several clashes between Turkey, Syria and Iraq over sharing right.\textsuperscript{57} A serious disagreement relating to water, arose in 1975 between Iraq and Syria over reduction in Euphrates flow as a result of the completion of Syria's Tabqa dam. During the dry season when the Turkish and Syrian dams impounded part of the Euphrates spring flood, a major crisis developed between Syria and Iraq that brought the two countries to the brink of war. Baghdad said the Euphrates flow fell from a normal 29,013 MCMY to 6,213 MCMY endangering the livelihood of three million farmers of Iraq who depended on the river for irrigation water. Iraq and Syria traded hostile statements in which Iraq threatened to take any action necessary to insure the Euphrates flow and Syria protested that it was passing on to Iraq 71 per cent of the water it received from Turkey. At the end of April 1975 a technical committee was formed by the Arab League, which had representatives from Syria, Iraq and seven other Arab States to look into the matter and solve the dispute in an amicable way.\textsuperscript{58}

As tension subsided, between Syria and Iraq, a new round of hostilities erupted between the riparian states and this time it related to the construction of the Karakaya Dam in Turkey. During the late 1970's and the early 1980's Baghdad and Damascus complained against Ankara that it was holding back a main part of the water from the Euphrates for its use. In 1978, Iraq insisted that Turkey should agree that the Euphrates would continue to flow regularly, before Iraq would agree to talks regarding the oil debt issue.\textsuperscript{58} As a matter of fact Turkey gave the necessary guarantee in August 1978, and an agreement was concluded providing for the resumption of oil supplies and for repayment by Turkey of its debts with wheat exports. Following this agreement the Energy Minister of Turkey, Deniz Baykal announced that a joint commission would soon be setup to examine Iraqi water demand. In this way, Ankara wanted to accom-

\textsuperscript{56} Thomas Naff and Ruth Maston, \textit{Water in the Middle East Conflict or Cooperation} (Colorado: Boulder, Westview, 1984), p.93.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., p.93.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p.94.
modate Baghdad. Nonetheless after the Gulf War broke out in September 1980 Baghdad continued to demand ever more water arguing that its new eight year irrigation and development plan for northern Iraq required additional water. Ankara promised to do its best to satisfy Baghdad. During the same period Damascus also stepped up its demand for a greater share of the Euphrates water. Consequently the World Bank refused to finance Ankara’s GAP project stating that Turkey should work-out a riparian treaty with its neighbours before undertaking the project.

The work on the South Eastern Anatolia project in Turkey began in the early 1980’s. The project aims at harnessing the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers to irrigate 1.7 million hectares of land and to build 18 hydroelectric stations. The centre-piece of the project is the Ataturk Dam, which cost $2300 million and is the world’s ninth largest dam. The whole Anatolia project is to be completed by 2005 at a cost of $32000 million. The Project treats the Euphrates-Trigris as one single Basin. The intention of Ankara was to build 22 dams on the Euphrates within the framework of southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP). The main aim of the South Eastern Anatolia Project is to boost agricultural and agro-industrial production for export and to raise the standard of living of the Kurdish people in region.

In 1982 a joint technical committee was established by Turkey and Iraq. Syria joined it in 1983. The committee has met fifteen times for general discussions and exchange of hydrological data, but it has been unable to solve the problem of competing claims by the sharing states.

In October 1984 a ‘Hot Pursuit’ agreement was signed between Turkey and Iraq, where by both sides could 'pursue subversive groups in the territory of the other up to five km. Turco-Syrian rapprochement was started in March 1985 which gained further momentum when the Syrian Prime Minister Adb-Al-Rauf Al-Qasm’s visited Ankara in March 1986. He pointed out that the water of Euphrates was very important to Syria

61. Naff and Maston op. cit., p.95.
and also implied that if during the building of major dams of GAP Turkey retained additional Euphrates water, Syria would retaliate with other means. During official negotiations regarding Syrian demand for water, the Turks were in favour that Ankara should provide sufficient water not less than 15,768MCMY from the Euphrates even during the accumulation of water at the Karakaya and Ataturk dams. The Turkish Project for exploiting the Euphrates is seen as disadvantageous to both Syria and Iraq. The centre-piece of this scheme is the Ataturk Dam, which will be the fifth largest rock-fill dam in the world and will irrigate an area of 875,000 hectares. A trilateral committee was set up to look into the issue of water allocation to those states. By the end of 1989 the technical committee had met fourteen times but had failed to reach a trilateral agreement on the utilization of the Euphrates waters. Syrian and Iraqi worries about the water that GAP would leave them with seemed justified when in November 1989 Turkey informed Syria and Iraq that in order to impound the Ataturk dam it would divert the Euphrates between January 13 and February 13, 1990. During the impoundment Syria would receive 3,784MCM, from the tributaries below the dam. Ankara explained the technical reasons for the move as well as what measures it would take to prevent any possible adverse effects on as Iraq and Syria. They wanted more information and a meeting was held in Damascus at the end of November 1990 between officials from the three countries. Technical information was provided by Turkey, but it refused to bargain over the amount of water to be released and the period of impoundment.

Turkey has adopted an assertive position on the issue of Euphrates water rights. It is determined to go ahead with its development projects without the cooperation of Iraq and Syria. According to the Turkish Primer Suleyman Demirel, Turkey is justified in taking advantage of its position as an upstream user of water resources. However, he pointed out that his country was willing to cooperate on joint ventures with the downstream states. Turkey has tried to link a deal on Euphrates to one on the Asi; which would imply Syrian recognition of Turkey’s jurisdiction over the province of

65. Suba Bolukbashi, op.cit., p.23.
Hatay. Syria and Iraq reiterated their calls for a trilateral as at the most recent meeting of the Joint Technical Committee in Damascus in September 1992, the first since the Kuwaiti crisis. The meeting ended in deadlock amidst accusations of Turkish intransigence. The Turkey argued yet that Iraq and Syria were receiving adequate quantities of water and that they should use their water supplies more efficiently. 66

Syria as well as Iraq have opposed the project from the beginning, for it views negotiations were held between Turkish and Syrian in September 1992 at which both sides reiterated their commitment to border security; Syria stated that it had outlawed Kurdish rebel activities in territory under its control. The long term significance of these developments remains to be seen. 67

CONCLUSION

Since ancient times, the struggle between riparian state for the water of the West Asian rivers has been a crucial problem. Thus, the scarce water supply of the rivers in arid region has represented one facet of the multidimensional conflict between riparian states of the West Asian region.

The competition to control the Jordan River is intense as this is the major source of water in a water-scarce region. On the one side is Israel and on the others are a number of Arab State. The political hostility between Israel and the Arab State has spilled over to the issue of sharing water so much to that waters of the Jordan have become emirate in controversy since the establishment of the Jewish State.

Facing acute water scarcity, the state of Israel ever since its establishment, has sought to acquire a major part of the water of the Jordan. Having faced prepreptual hostility from its Arab States, Israel considers the control over water supply as a strategic instrument and defensive technique that greatly affects regional balance of power. Israel has persisted in her plans to divert the Jordan River out of the water and area to the Negev desert. This was the major feature of the National Water Carrier Project. The first stage started almost immediately after the Armistice Agreement of 1949 and

67. Ibid., p.37.
it gave partial access to the headwaters of the Jordan.

The Johnston 1955 Unified Plan rejected by Arab League which was based on a multinational approach to Jordan water development and management.

Throughout the 1950's and early 1960's the US along with the UN kept an trying to convince with the Arab and Israelis of the need to adopt a multilateral and cooperative approach. However, neither of them were in a mood to relevant with the result that each party tended to proceed with their unilateral schemes. This confrontationist approach was bound to lead to conflict sooner or later. The third Arab-Israel War of 1967 was partly the result of rising tensions over the issue of sharing of the Jordan. In the 1967 war, Israeli captured the West Bank, Gara Strip, Golan Height.

The Litani, which is in the south of Lebanon has been a major source of friction between the Republic of Lebanon and the state of Israel. The sharing of water of the Litani river has always remained at the centre of a controversy between the two. Though the Litani is a wholly national river, for a water scarce Israel, it has always been a source of great attraction. Time and again, Israel has made repeated attempts to acquire a portion of the Litani's water but with little success. After the 1967 Arab Israeli War Lebanon became the most important base for Palestinian guerilla activities against Israel. In order to counter Palestinian raids, its initiated a policy of retaliatory raids against guerilla basis in Lebanon since early 1970.

The Israeli raids were instrumented in the break down of the Lebanon political system and break-out of Civil War in 1975. In March 1978 Israel launched a massive invasion of Lebanon code named operation 'Stone of Wisdom'. According to Ezer Weizmann the operation and plans worked out by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) were to operate against Palestinian terrorist and their bases all along the Lebanese-Israeli border up to distance of 10 kilometres inside Lebanon.

The Israel invasion led to the setting up of the UNIFIL which was deployed in South Lebanon to oversee Israel withdrawal and act as a buffer between the combatants. Though UNIFIL could not be deployed in the whole southern Lebanon, as required by mandate, it took active steps to ensure that as far as possible its area of operation continued to remain under its control. UNIFIL did not use force either
against Israel or its surrogate Saad Haddad’s South Lebanon Army nor against the PLO. Throughout its active life, since March 1978 to Israel invasion of June 1982, UNIFIL functioned with great difficulties. From time to the leadership of the PLO gave assurances of its intention to cooperate with UNIFIL but, attempts by Palestinians and Lebanese armed elements to enter the UNIFIL area of operation were a recurring feature. After the Second Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 code named operation ‘Peace for Galilee’ the Israeli forces established a security zone in southern Lebanon including the Litani Wazzani, Hasbani river. It was handed over to Israel’s portage major Saad Haddad.

Water was an important item on the agenda of the multilateral talks which began in Madrid in 1991. At the subsequent rounds of negotiations Israeli government showed a willing to withdraw from southern Lebanon in return for assured water supply from the Litani But Lebanese government was unwilling to give any concessions. In Vienna round of multilateral talks held in May 1992, the Jordanians Palestinians and Israelis agreed to cooperate and exchange data on water resources. The Jordanians insisted that water utilization must be user-related and an accord should seek to more from a position of disparity to equitable allocation of water. The working group on water resources has met seven times, most recently in Amman in June 1995. Though the participants are far from an agreement there are indications that a consensus is gradually evolving. The Euphrates and Tigris are international rivers. These have immense regional importance. The economic prosperity of Turkey, Syria and Iraq revolve around the two river as they constitute the principal source of hydropower and agricultural development. As an upstream state Turkey has sought to exploit water in its territory, thereby causing acute concern to its downstream state. The relation between Turkey and Syria have been strained many a times mainly due to formers efforts to control the flow of the rivers. During the dry season when the Turkish and Syria dams impounded part of the Euphrates spring flood, a major crisis developed between Syria and Iraq that brought the two countries to the brink of war Iraq and Syria traded hostile statements in which Iraq threatened to take any action necessary to regulate the Euphrates flow. In early 1980’s Iraq and Syria complained against Turkey that it was
holding back a part of the water from the Euphrates for its use. In 1982 a Joint Technical Committee was set up by Turkey and Iraq. Syria joined it 1983. The committee had discussed fifteen times on exchange of hydrological data, but the problem of water allocation however has not been solved so far. Turkey’s assertive position on the issue of Euphrates water right is unacceptable to both Syria and Iraq. They have therefore spurned Ankara’s offer of joint ventures as long as their legitimate rights are not recognized by the Turkish government.

In the 1990’s the problem of sharing Euphrates water has become more complicated as Syrian and Turkish irrigation works are nearing completion and sewage and industrial development in the two countries threaten to lower water qualities grown up phenomenally the recent years. Growing population is also a source of water concern as the demand for domestic use has polluted the water quality and quantity day by day.

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