

Foreign Policy and Defense (Pre-Sinai Campaign)

Introduction

The nationalization of the Suez Canal by President Nasser of Egypt and the failure of subsequent international attempts to devise a regime for the Canal which would also be acceptable to the original owners and the Canal users brought about a drastic change in the Middle East situation, entailing a conflict between Nasser and powers outside the region. Already beforehand, the government of France had regarded Egypt as one of the main stumbling blocks in Algeria, whose rebels it supported. Against this background, a far-reaching rapprochement took place between France and Israel, its first fruits consisting of secret shipments of French arms to Israel. After many months of an anxious, almost desperate, search for sources of arms to offset the growing quantities reaching the Arab countries from both West and East, a generous, capable France came to Israel's aid.

In an uncharacteristic ploy, in order to maintain secrecy, on the one hand, and share the good news with the Knesset and the nation, on the other, Ben-Gurion resorted to quoting a long poem about the arrival of arms in which the tense—whether past or future—has been left deliberately vague, though a perusal of the debate makes it clear that the arms had already been unloaded in Israel.

Great Britain is still regarded as hostile to Israel. Iraqi forces in Jordan are considered to be a major threat, and from the debate it is hard to predict that within less than two weeks, French, British and Israeli forces would take up arms against Egypt "in collusion."

Sitting 169 of the Third Knesset

15 October 1956 (10 Heshvan 5717)

The Prime Minister, D. Ben-Gurion: Mr. Speaker, before anything else, I bow my head in sorrow, love and admiration for our soldiers who fell in recent weeks in the defense of our country while proving to our enemies that Jewish blood is not lightly shed in our own country. I extend my deepest condolences to all the bereaved parents and families of those brave men. There is no consolation or compensation for your tragic loss. The memory of your beloved and sacred sons will be enshrined in the history of our people as a symbol of devotion, heroism and brotherly love. (The Knesset stands in memory of the fallen.)

Knesset Members...last year was a crucial one as regards the security and international status of the Middle East. It began with the Czech deal, which sent massive amounts of arms...from the Soviet Bloc to Egypt, and ended with the Suez Canal crisis. The U.S.S.R. claims that all this was done for the sole purpose of enhancing peace in the region. The actual outcome was, however, that tension in the Middle East and the whole world, and especially the threat to Israel, has increased. The Egyptian tyrant, like the other Arab rulers, has never stopped the frantic preparations for a second round against us, although where the foreign press and the U.N. is concerned he pretends to seek peace....

The bloody clashes on the borders have increased in the wake of the recruitment of murderous gangs—known as *fedayeen*—by the Egyptian government and their establishment in all the Arab countries, particularly in the Gaza Strip and the Hashemite Kingdom. These gangs cross our borders, sometimes penetrating quite deep into Israel, and kill innocent civilians as they work in the fields, women and children in their homes, and anyone who crosses their path....

...The Government's position has been and remains...that we must preserve peace—even this unstable peace of ours—as long as we can, while at the same time...increasing our military strength....The Egyptian ruler has stated quite openly that his object is to destroy Israel, and that his quarrel is not only with us but with "international Jewry and Jewish capital," formulae which we remember from Hitler....The Opposition has advocated that we initiate a war with the fascist tyrant in Cairo before the Egyptian army manages to absorb the large quantities of weapons it has received from the Soviet Bloc. My colleagues in the Government and myself disagree with that approach. We are in favor of self-defense, and if we are attacked we will fight with all our strength until the end, that is, until we are victorious. But we know how terrible war is...and do not think that it can solve all history's problems, at least not permanently....

In view of the growing Egyptian threat, we regard it as our duty to make a concerted effort to reinforce the IDF and increase its deterrent power. And also to preserve peace—inasmuch as this depends on us. We value peace because we value human life. Allow me to make a brief personal confession: on two fateful occasions I did not share in the nation's joy, although there have been few occasions in our history which were as rightfully joyous as those two.

The first occasion was on...14 May 1948, after I had proclaimed the renewal of the State of Israel....I heard the sound of the nation's rejoicing in the streets of Tel Aviv, and imagined to myself the rejoicing of the Jewish people throughout the diaspora. My joy was mingled with sadness, because I knew what awaited us in the days to come, although I had been expecting such times ever since the end of the war in Europe. After the historic ceremony at the Museum ended I hurried to the head-

quarters of the Hagana—it was not yet the IDF then—and was informed of the movement of troops from Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon to the newly-born Israel.

The second occasion was at the end of the fighting in January 1949, when our young army had defeated all the Arab armies. I was not among those who gloried in this great victory, because I knew that it was not a final one, that a difficult struggle or struggles still awaited us. I did not suppose that our neighbors would accept their defeat lightly, nor did I pin great hopes on the U.N.'s ability to keep the peace in the region....I knew that it was not the fine principles of the U.N. Charter which would determine matters but opposing interests and the policy of power....Furthermore, even on the day of victory I could not forget...the heavy price we had paid it. More than five thousand of our dear sons and daughters had perished, and thousands of bereaved parents had been deprived of their dear ones forever....Since then, I have always thought of war in human as well as in political terms, and I am not ashamed to say this, because of my fierce and deep love for the young people whose lives will be endangered in war, as well as because of my anxiety for the mothers and fathers, wives and children, who might lose their dear ones.

We do not want people to be killed, from whatever nation, and if we have managed to avoid that disaster till now, during this year of anxiety, I do not know how history will judge us, but I am pleased that we have prevented war so far. Instead of war, whose losses are certain and whose historical value is questionable...we have tried to increase the defensive strength of the IDF. It has not been easy and we have not achieved all we wanted, but we acted in accordance with the dictate of our conscience....

The Members of the Knesset are doubtless aware of the fact that weapons are not easily bought....We knocked on many doors and found them closed. Britain, which sold heavy tanks to the Egyptian ruler, adamantly refused to sell arms to Israel....The U.S., to which we owe a debt of gratitude for its political and financial aid to our state, encouraged its European allies to sell us arms....This is not enough, however, and we will continue to demand defensive weapons from the U.S....We are extremely grateful to France, which was the first to supply us with 24 new Mystere 4 jet planes, and has recently been followed by Canada and Britain, which have also sold us planes. We have also purchased other kinds of arms from various countries.

I will not describe our efforts to equip the IDF with the necessary minimum, because this undertaking has not yet been completed. We have undergone many months of anxious expectancy, as well as times of great joy. I would like to share one of the experiences with you as it was penned by one of our most able poets, Nathan A...whose work de-

serves to be recorded permanently in the *Knesset Record*, as an enduring treasure of the state and the IDF.

Long will it still be told in fear and wonder,
In the annals of the nation between the seas,
Entrenched in its first and last and only land,
As an Israeli rock in an Arab sea,
How a horde of enemies only yesterday defeated,
Back to its lair on its belly retreated,
Re-emerged brandishing new, unknown weapons,
Ready to attack with all its might and venom.
Long will it still be told in fear and wonder,
How in fields and markets daily life continued,
With all its myriad scenes and sundry sounds.
While from within it, through every shout and whisper,
From the very core of its innermost being,
Through the talking and the singing, the quarreling and laughing,
One request arose: Weapons, both offensive and defensive!
Quickly, straightaway, while there's still time!

When the time comes, and peace reigns in the land,
When the East is quiet, someone might then ask out loud:
When—after 1948—did the Jews decide once again
To break the ring surrounding them?
Then some will answer one way and others another,
While a few will suddenly recall a rolling beach,
The sound of the sea and a few shadowy figures
Moving silently beneath an autumn moon.

That night may once have been, or is to come,
'Tis a night that is unknown as yet.
But the time will come when it will be known.
We'll have a date, which may be the threshold
Beyond which lies peace and prosperity.
A simple, sandy night, as yet unnamed,
But anyone who beheld it then will say:
I saw the night when history was changed.

That night may once have been, or is a dream,
A dream of metal, in quantities and new,
Its barrels long extending,
On steel chains thundering.
From afar it comes, upon the beach it climbs,
And imagination becomes real,
The instant, the moment it touches the ground

It turns into the power of Jewish steel.
That night may once have been, or is to come,
The wheel of time yet once again may turn,
And on that night, how wonderful its name,
All kinds of weapons pass by in parade.
And when each one so eagerly is grasped,
As if mirage or vision is embraced,
Its strength increases ten-fold in intensity
Because it has felt the touch of necessity!

And as each and every weapon,
Into the darkness disappears,
It changes the scenery around it,
In a way that cannot be ignored.
And soon another stretch of Jewish land,
Formerly as desolate as the desert sand,
Changes rapidly and in a trice becomes
As productive and fertile as it was once.

And if that night once was or is a dream—
Let's just suppose that this was really so—
Let each and every Jew, whether woman or man,
Here or in exile, be aware of the fact
That the dream of such a night is real,
More real than the things they do and feel,
And that it seals their very fate
And determines their actions each day.

It witnesses, whether dreaming or awake,
That the watchman shall neither slumber nor sleep,
While soldiers carrying loads,
Bare-chested, unrestrained,
Bear salvation on bent backs,
And all the while the engines
Noisily follow one another,
Sealing our fate for life and power.
That night once was or yet will be,
'Tis no illusion, either way.
'Tis an unknown night, a festive night,
Which will be remembered for all time.
Happy is the nation whose fate this is...
Whose defects are apparent to both enemy and friend,
While its finest, boldest labors
Are still concealed, obscured by darkness.
That night may be a dream, but waking and in fact

It dispels the fear of the disparity
Between us and the power of destructiveness,
Of iron approaching and the earth trembling,
Let all in Israel know
That by night it absorbs life- and fire-power...
Let Israel's body know it...
And let steel swell its spirit...

Let Israel's nation know it,
And see what matters as well as what does not,
And why, willy nilly, it must muster
All its moral and physical strength.
Let the enemy behind us also know,
For nights like these, as shadows passing by,
May yet darken his day
If he dares to strike a blow.

Perhaps that night once was. Or yet will be.
With the dimness of sand and sea,
The shriek of metal, voices whispered low,
The salt sea breeze, and also
The sense of a great turning point
As well as of wonderment.
If the nation only knew how much it owed forever
To the few who undertook this great endeavor.

That is what the poet wrote. In my poor prose I will only say that there has been a substantial improvement in the IDF's capacity, though I should note with concern that Egypt alone still has a tremendous advantage in fire-power on land, in the air and at sea. It has destroyers and submarines, it has heavy tanks—British, Czech and Soviet—it has more and better jet planes and bombers than we have. And we must not forget that the other Arab countries are also armed to the teeth. But we are not as lacking in weapons as we were at the beginning of the year....The IDF is strong not because it has better weapons than its enemies...or because it has strong allies...but because there is no limit to the devotion to the defense of the country of its soldiers, sailors and airmen....

...Although I am confident that in any clash with Egypt or the other Arab countries we will emerge victorious...we wish to avoid war and ensure our rights, status and security. The only way to do this is if our friends and those who really seek peace give us sufficient defensive weapons of superior quality to deter the enemy from fighting us or encroaching upon our rights...We do not yet have sufficient and adequate arms...and that is why we are still asking for them first and foremost from the U.S., which does not want war in the Middle East and desires

the good of both Israel and the Arab countries....The Arab rulers do not have the same sense of the value of human life as we do, and...the huge quantities of arms in their possession could cause them to act irrationally, especially since they constantly proclaim that they intend to destroy Israel.

...Every intelligent politician throughout the world knows that any explosion in the Middle East could set off a dangerous worldwide conflagration...and it is out of a sense of responsibility for world peace that I say that all those who continue to send offensive weapons to the Arab countries, who openly state their intention of destroying Israel, and all those who deprive Israel of defensive weapons, bear a heavy burden of responsibility for peace in the region and the whole world....The leaders of the U.S.S.R. repeat their desire for world peace almost daily...but the tanks, planes, bombers, cannon, submarines and destroyers they send the Egyptian tyrant can't hear; while the Egyptian soldiers who are to man and use these weapons hear their commanders and leaders make very different statements daily....

Even the British Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, told the British parliament a few weeks ago that the Egyptian tyrant's next step would be to make war on Israel. As in previous years, the prime concern of Israel's Government will be to preserve peace as far as is possible and to increase the IDF's ability to maintain our security. As well as the constant threat of a war of annihilation, we are also confronted with incessant guerrilla warfare...mainly from Egypt and Jordan, by armed gangs, or *fedayeen*, who cross our borders and kill any human being they encounter...and are encouraged in this by the governments of those Arab countries....

...In 1954 and 1955 Egypt caused us 242 dead and wounded in this way. In April of this year the Secretary-General of the U.N., Mr. Hammarskjold, came to Israel in an attempt to arrange a ceasefire on our borders, even if the other sections of the Armistice Agreements were not kept. Israel was prepared to keep the Armistice Agreements in full, provided there was mutuality....

The first to infringe the renewed assurance were Egypt and Jordan...initiating murderous attacks on Israeli citizens in the Negev...and near Kfar Saba...in South Jerusalem...and near Afula...in the environs of Jerusalem...and on the road to Eilat...near Um el Fahm...and at Ramat Rachel, where four archaeologists were killed. A Yemenite woman gathering olives was murdered in Aminadav, a tractor driver was killed at Ma'oz Haim...five Israelis were killed near Sedom...and two Israeli laborers were murdered by the Jordanians near Even Yehuda.

After the recent attacks from Egypt and Jordan we...asked the U.N. representatives to...help put an end to them....I do not accuse the U.N. representatives of ill will, but it is evident that they are incapable of

compelling our neighbors to keep their word. The chain of murders continued. We had no choice but to take action to defend ourselves....This was, rather, our national duty....

...In accordance with the U.N. Charter, every member of the organization has the right to defend itself....Nevertheless, certain U.N. representatives deny Israel that right...calling our defensive actions "acts of retaliation."...Israel is, I believe, the only country in the world whose citizens are unsafe because the rulers of the neighboring countries send bands of murderers against them. I don't think that any country in the world would accept this state of affairs....We will not let them "penetrate deep into Israel and make the lives of its citizens hell," as they boast....

The Jordanian ruler, who released the murderers of Israeli Druse citizens and whose soldiers killed archaeologists in Jerusalem and workers at the Dead Sea, should know that those lives were precious and those responsible for their murder will not be let off lightly. We will not be denied the right to defend ourselves as long as the U.N. is unable to stop these murders....

Regrettably, this is not our only disagreement with the U.N. For some time that organization has tended to regard the Armistice Agreements between us and our neighbors as a one-sided commitment by Israel to the U.N...ignoring their violation by Jordan, Egypt and Syria....Jordan has always ignored clause 8 of the agreements giving us freedom of access to the holy places...and the U.N. has done nothing to enforce it....That same clause allows Israel access to the Hebrew University buildings on Mount Scopus...the cemetery on the Mount of Olives and the use of the Latrun-Jerusalem road. All these commitments have been disregarded...and the U.N. has done nothing....

Perhaps the U.N. should not be blamed for being unable to prevent the murderous attacks from Jordan and Egypt and ensure that the Armistice Agreements are observed. The Security Council's failure to implement the 1951 resolution concerning the freedom of navigation...reflected the U.N.'s negligence...as well as its unevenhanded treatment of Israel and the Arab countries....

The U.N. was established on the principles of peace and justice, which are no less dear to us than to anyone else. It is our right and duty to ensure, as far as we can, that these principles apply to us as much as to the other members of the U.N. But it cannot be assumed that Israel will accept unevenhanded treatment with equanimity....

The U.N. Charter...also requires the peaceful settlement of international disputes. We have proposed meetings with Arab rulers in order to achieve this...but our call has gone unanswered. We protested against the economic boycott organized by the Arabs in order to undermine our economy—something which is forbidden by the Charter....

Israel has always sought to maintain the Armistice Agreements in full, and even to establish relations of peace and cooperation with all its neighbors, in accordance with the U.N. Charter, on a basis of equality and mutuality. We have not witnessed any effort by the U.N. to induce our neighbors to adhere to these principles....

Knesset Members, we have made a desperate effort to maintain peace, however precarious, this year...and we are always ready to aid any attempt to establish lasting peace....The British proposal, in the wake of the Iraqi ruler's statement that a settlement should be based on the 1947 Partition Plan, is not a step towards peace, however. It is a covert attack on the integrity of our borders....We have not taken an inch of the territory of Egypt, Syria or Lebanon, and they shall not have an inch of ours. Egypt still retains the Gaza Strip, which does not belong to it, and the Hashemite government conquered parts of Western Palestine illegally....We have declared our readiness to make minor border adjustments, on a mutual basis....But Israel will not be fragmented, and that proposal may have been made merely to distract world attention from the Suez problem....

The Suez problem which has currently gained world attention is nothing new for Israel....The U.N.'s helplessness regarding freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal has been evident for several years...at least as far as Israel is concerned.

...When the Egyptian tyrant suddenly decided to seize the Suez Canal from the international company, and several countries saw that their basic interests were damaged, England invited various countries to London to discuss the matter but..."forgot" to invite Israel, the only country which had been harmed for several years by the Egyptian tyrant's disregard of international law and the decisions of the U.N. And when the U.S.S.R. suggested adding various countries to the list of invitees, including some, like Jordan, which had no contact with the Canal, it also "forgot" to add Israel's name to the list.

Israel was not particularly disturbed by the change of ownership of the Suez Canal because its international rights there had also been disregarded by the previous masters, and no international body had done anything about it....The Security Council session called to discuss the Suez problem ended two days ago with six resolutions which say hardly anything since the U.S.S.R. vetoed the proposal of the Western countries....It need not be expected that the Egyptian tyrant will pay them any more heed than he has other international agreements in the past....It is our duty to state from this podium that Israel will not accept any discrimination in its sovereign and international rights, and the continuation of the arbitrary blockade of Israeli shipping in the Suez Canal and the Red Sea by the Egyptian tyrant will undermine peace in the Middle East. International peace and justice are indivisible....The

Egyptian tyrant is endangering peace in the region by disregarding international justice.

The situation in the Middle East is further complicated by the Anglo-Iraqi plan to station Iraqi troops in Jordan. In April 1949 we signed an Armistice Agreement with Jordan. Iraq and Saudi Arabia, which also invaded Israel in 1948, refused to sign any agreement with us and continue to maintain a state of war with Israel. The entry of the Iraqi army into Jordan undermines the Armistice Agreement we signed with Jordan.

We have known for some time that the Egyptian tyrant has far-reaching ambitions to control all the Arab countries...and the first victim of his design will be Jordan. In the "good old days," when the relations between Britain and Egypt were good, the Egyptian tyrant thought that with England's help or agreement he would be able to obtain part of Israel's Negev in order to build a land bridge between Egypt and Jordan. Ever since the Egyptian tyrant revealed his imperialist intentions regarding the countries of the Middle East, which trend is supported by external forces hostile to Britain, the plan to annex Jordan to Iraq has apparently been revived. The entry into Jordan of troops belonging to a country which does not have even an armistice agreement with Israel...undermines the status quo in the region...Israel maintains the status quo based on the Armistice Agreement with the Hashemite kingdom, but this is dependant upon its not being violated by another, hostile government, and Israel reserves for itself the right to act should the status quo be upset and foreign troops move into Jordan.

In accordance with the guidelines approved by the Knesset, the Government of Israel will continue to develop relations of friendship and mutual aid with all peace-loving countries, regardless of their internal regime and without damaging the interests of other countries. It will endeavor to establish friendly relations with the countries of Asia, strengthen its ties with countries where there are Jewish communities and reinforce its links with all those countries which aid Israel's defense and development and enable their Jewish communities to participate in building Israel and to immigrate to it.

In accordance with those guidelines the Government has taken a series of steps to strengthen its ties with several countries....We tend to claim that we are isolated, but that is only half the truth....By our very character and history we are one of the most isolated countries in the world, but in another sense Israel has no fewer friends than other countries....We also benefit to a considerable extent from international financial and material aid, as is exemplified by the loans and grants we have received from the U.S....

Some countries acquire friends easily because they are rich and powerful...or because they share a common language or religion...or even a common enemy. Israel has none of these things...so how can we

acquire friends? One factor is the Jewish diaspora, which in some, though not all, countries serves as a link with Israel. This is not the case, of course, with the countries of Asia and Central Africa, where there are very few Jews, if any. There are small Jewish communities in the Scandinavian countries, but they are assimilating at an alarming rate and do not constitute an element of any influence, so that the attitude to Israel of the Scandinavian countries is determined by the matter in hand....

...Our enemies—the Arab countries—are eagerly courted by almost all the Great Powers, some of which evince hostility to Israel solely for this reason....The firm basis upon which we may acquire friends and allies can only be...the illumination of our creative and liberating enterprise, the fact that we are an example for other nations, and our ability to help backward countries through scientific, cultural and technical aid without any fear that we seek to take control.

...We have always regarded the establishment of the state as a process involving redemption, creativity and peace, as well as the ingathering of the exiles, the imparting of our ancient cultural and moral values and the dissemination of the scientific innovations of this day and age. We see ourselves as a nation which stands on its own feet and cooperates on a basis of equality and universal partnership in the efforts of mankind to ascend to greater cultural and material heights and to achieve freedom and equality, as human beings formed, regardless of nationality, color, creed or sex, in God's image.

That is the messianic vision which beat for thousands of years in the heart of the Jewish people; it is my deep belief that it is that which has brought us thus far, and only if we remain faithful to it all our lives will our historical mission be truly fulfilled.

Our grave worries concerning security...which are foremost among our considerations just now, must not distract us for a moment from the vital missions which constitute the essence of our messianic vision. The cultivation of the country and the blossoming of the desert, absorbing and integrating immigrants, developing science, learning and scholarship, educating and training the younger generation for pioneering work, increasing productivity, working steadfastly for economic independence...the removal of ethnic barriers and the unification of the nation, increasing the birthrate and raising health standards, eliminating the slum neighborhoods and teaching the Hebrew language and minimal cultural and economic standards to the whole nation, establishing a regime of social justice and civil liberty—all these are our daily bread, they are needed of themselves and they also strengthen our security and and maintain the State of Israel.

We must not only maintain it but also make it a lodestone for all Jews, and this is possible if we all arm ourselves with good will and bear the burden of the state with love, if we help our brethren who are re-

turning to us from the various dispersions, if we work assiduously and manage our economy efficiently and well, if we do our duty faithfully, each one in accordance with his abilities and means, if we put the public good above our personal benefit, if we treat one another with respect and trust, if we dare regard the difficulties and dangers confronting us honestly and fortify our resolve to overcome them together and, above all, if we are infused with a love for our fellow-Jew...equal to that of our dear sons and daughters, who risk their lives to defend us, our borders and our independence on nights of anxiety, heroism and dedication.

We desire and are entitled to act, work and create in our homeland in peace and security, because we seek peace. But we must not ignore worrying developments in the region, whether the machinations of the Egyptian tyrant, the plotting of the Iraqi government or negative influences from outside the region. We must be on our guard with open eyes, good will, farsightedness, resoluteness and increased military strength. We are required to make a supreme security effort; it has been imposed upon us by outside factors and hostile forces. We may be confronting fateful decisions and events. If we stand ready and united the Rock of Israel will not abandon us.

...
M. Begin (Herut): Mr. Speaker, no peace, no armistice, no ceasefire, no status quo. A bloody war which kills people, an ever-increasing war of survival, is being waged between Israel and its enemies....That is the situation....We are still being forced to defend our very existence....If we recognize our historic right to the land of our fathers and our human right to defend ourselves...we will endure....At this time...all the warmth of our hearts and the love of our souls is given to our children, the heroic Israeli soldiers, to the mothers and fathers who fear for the fate of their children and to the bereaved families who mourn their loved ones...

What is legal self-defense?...Disastrously for us, the Government has placed that sacred concept between the Scylla of counter-killing and the Charybdis of counter-destruction, thereby harming the nation morally, politically and militarily. The Government owes us an explanation...as to why the killing of fifty Arabs who cannot be proved to have attacked Ramat Rachel is legal self-defense, while the liberation of the homeland occupied by the foreign ruler from which the murderers came and will come constitutes aggression....

...The Government defines its actions as "defensive," while the entire world defines them as "retaliatory."...The Government has suddenly become sensitive to semantics....I recall that last year official Government spokesmen bandied about the terms "preventive war" and "initiated war." We warned of the danger in misusing those misnomers in our situation. If two nations live in peace and one fears that the other will attack it, it attacks first....But is that our situation? Are we

at peace with our enemies?...Our neighbors say that they are at war with us and perpetrate acts of aggression against us...imposing a blockade on our shipping and murdering men, women and children.

...In the twentieth century one no longer declares war, one simply attacks....Our position, however, is extremely strange: the enemy declares war, not 24 hours before attacking but an unlimited time in advance....That is what all the Arab rulers have done....A state of war exists. And in these conditions we are told that any military action is preventive or initiated war!...The whole world regards our defensive actions in Hussan and Kalkilya as aggression...and I am prepared to praise the Government for refusing to succumb to the verdict of the world, which would have us refrain from defending ourselves in any way....The logical conclusion from all this is that the world will condemn our liberation of Hebron and Bethlehem, whence the attackers of Mevo Beitar, Ramat Rachel and Jerusalem come...demonstrating that the Government has failed in its efforts to convince the world....

...For years we have said that retaliatory actions cannot end the bloodshed. But the Government stopped its ears to our voice time and again, maintaining that one more action would deter the enemy....You based your theory of retaliation on two false assumptions. The first is that the enemy can be punished. Can nations be punished? Sometimes even individuals cannot be punished, or reformed....Was Germany reformed after its military defeat of 1918?...The second is that the Arabs do not hold human life as dear as we do....This is a regrettable fact, but true....So that if we kill even large numbers of Arabs, that will have no deterrent effect....

We must all ask the Government, where is the policy of retaliation taking us?...One possible answer is that the existing situation will continue: they will kill us and we will kill them; they will destroy our buildings and we will destroy theirs....I believe I am speaking on behalf of all the citizens of Israel if I say...that over the last two weeks the entire nation has been shocked by the terrible news of the deaths of thirty of our best and noblest sons, who fell in just two battles, not for liberation, not for a solution, but merely for retaliation, which does not solve any problems. And tomorrow or the day after a few dozen more will be killed....Is this the way? Is this our future?

There is another possibility, however....Our acts of retaliation could lead to a general conflagration in the region...and that is something we do not want. But you decide that this is the one and only course to be taken, knowing the dangers involved....I appeal to the Government to cease sending our sons into battle in conditions which...favor the enemy, by waiving the overriding advantage of surprise. Do not send our sons into the battlefield and order them to retreat so that the situation may return to what it was before....Do all you can to spare Jewish

blood and tell them: Stay there. It is our homeland. Murderers will not attack Jews from there if Israeli soldiers are there.

...As for our relations with the U.N., for many years we warned against the entrenchment of the U.N. machinery in Israel. Our voice went unheard, as usual. What illusions were based on the Armistice Agreements and the alien supervisory machinery...When the Secretary-General visited us in April he came to the conclusion that the Armistice Agreement had not been observed...and proposed to us and our enemies that we sign a ceasefire. So we did...Meanwhile, the bloodshed has continued, while the U.N. has become a party to the dispute in the region...The Secretary-General's report, further, contends that the Armistice Agreements are tantamount to establishing an international regime in Israel. I would like to ask the members of the Government if they have read the report in full and, if they have, why have they not reacted to that contention?...If they have not read it, what have they been doing?

...There is also the danger that alien Iraqi troops, in addition to the foreign army known as the Arab Legion, will enter the conquered part of Palestine. The Government stated that it was "concerned and surprised" at the British announcement to this effect. "Concern" I can understand, but why "surprise"? Did we not warn you many months ago... that Iraqi troops might enter the eastern and western parts of Trans-jordan?...Whenever we suggested that the time was right to liberate that area of our homeland did you not tell us that this was an unrealistic escapade, and that this would bring us up against the British?...And now we hear that Israel "reserves for itself the right to act" should Iraqi troops enter Jordan. Surely you know that Iraq is still part of the Baghdad Pact, the last vestige of British control in the region. On what basis have you suddenly changed your tune?...What kind of "freedom of action" do you intend? Will you advance into Jordan or will you not?...Do you not realize that the danger of encountering British troops is as great as it ever was?...

...We desire no clash with Britain. But I said two weeks ago in the name of those who sent me, one hundred and seven thousand free Jewish voters...that although Britain still adheres to a policy which is hostile to Israel, at this fateful time it should think about the price it paid for its own treacherous denial of its promise to the Jewish people. If Britain is prepared to change its attitude to us, we will be prepared to change ours to it, looking ahead and not back.

Today, as we confront overt British threats, we must remind England's government that the generation which arose to fight against Britain, and defeated it, still lives. Five hundred of those who fought were killed, twelve were hanged, but thousands are still alive. They have forgotten nothing, they have learned a great deal...We say to the British people: when the abyss opened its bloody maw and swallowed up

millions of our brethren, our mothers and our fathers in Europe, you ignored our cry....But by now you know what it is to fight the Jewish people, who are prepared to make any sacrifice for their cause....We hope that the British people will not repeat the mistakes of the past....

The crucial question today is, however, what Israel's Government will or will not do. If it fails to act, this means that it accepts the tightening of the rope around the nation's neck. If it decides to act—despite all the bitterness in our hearts because of missed opportunities in the past—we will support the Government's action....

The question with regard to the Suez crisis is when to act. The piracy of the Egyptian foe has sealed Israel's two vital marine routes....The Prime Minister has declared Israel's intention of using force to obtain a passage for our shipping in the Suez Canal and the Dead Sea....But when? For three months the Egyptian tyrant has quarreled with half of mankind, and...the Government has said: we are not involved in this dispute....All we want is freedom of navigation for ourselves. We do not care who controls the Suez Canal...Now that dispute is about to end....The U.N. will probably reach a compromise with Nasser.... What will you do—or say—then?...

...If this Government were fair and not one of machinations—I quote the Prime Minister—if the Government were democratic and not based on the division of spoils—I quote the Prime Minister—it would go to the nation today and announce general elections so that the nation could say whether it approved of the Government's policy or not. Since the elections the situation has changed radically—the Czech-Egypt arms deal, the Suez crisis, the movement of the Iraqi army. Any honest government would admit that its course was wrong: it has not put a stop to the bloodshed...it has not ended our enemies' preparations to destroy us, it has not told the nation what it will do tomorrow if the Iraqi army invades. It recites poems by Alterman. Any decent government would return its mandate to the nation....

I know that the Government will not hold elections, however, because it is not a decent Government, it is based on machinations—that is what the Prime Minister said; it is not democratic, it is founded on the division of spoils—that is what the Prime Minister said; so there will be no elections. You will not go to the people. There is nothing to be done. But if you wish to continue following your misguided course, for God's sake, take our advice, look at what you have done to us in the last eight years and change your ways. If you do, it will be better for us if you do good to yourselves by doing good to the people than if you harm yourselves by continuing to harm the people.

These are the loyal words of Israel's loyal Opposition.

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