

Sitting 183 of the Third Knesset

7 November 1956 (3 Kislev 5717)

M. Begin (Herut): Mr. Speaker, representatives of the nation. The moral and historic meaning of the mighty campaign of our glorious and heroic army, the campaign of attacking, advancing, splitting, bypassing, surrounding, destroying, controlling, defeating, liberating, conquering and triumphing is legal national self-defense.

We have a special reason to rejoice at the fact that this awareness is now shared by the whole nation. I cannot help noting with a modicum of

satisfaction that a week ago the British Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, joined those who share this view.

At this time, when our hearts are overflowing, with both joy and concern, we turn first to our nation, to the men, women and children, to the old and young in Israel. With all proud modesty we can say, after we have withstood the supreme test: a small nation—but a great one; there are those who are stronger; there are those who are richer; there are those who are cleverer; but there is none which is braver or more steadfast than we. Our army grew from within this nation. Today we all honor the heroic sons who fell in battle. With their victorious swords and the blood of their hearts they renewed the covenant between the God of Israel and His chosen people and promised land. We honor those who fought, the thousands of soldiers who risked their lives and set off for an unknown land.

We must also honor the planners today. As a member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, I had the honor of hearing an explanation of the campaign from an officer of the General Staff, and I can say, doubtless on behalf of all the members of the Committee, that the planning was outstanding, and we must thank the Chief of Staff, all his officers and all those who engaged in that sacred work.

I also know that our revered teacher Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the knight of truth and splendor, would have instructed one of his pupils to say the following today: despite everything that has been between us in the past, and despite everything that may and doubtless will happen between us in the future, with the unavoidable rivalry between us, we congratulate the Prime Minister and the Government, which made a wise and just decision last Sunday.

That decision remains wise and just, despite the fact that it has been described in terms which are not unknown to us: "an act of madness"—*Pravda*; "a low adventure"—*l'Humanité*; "bare faced aggression"—*Daily Herald*.

We stood behind that campaign before it began. We were with our heroic soldiers on nights of anxiety and days of concern. We will also stand behind that campaign in the difficult days ahead of us. If the Government errs, it is as free men, without fear or favor, that we will criticize it, with all the openness and honesty of a free and loyal Opposition which is entitled and even obliged to express its thoughts. But the whole world, both west and east, must know that 96 percent of Israel's population approves of that campaign.

With the Speaker's permission, I will say to the nations of the world: we are convinced that this small, brave nation which has defended itself, its freedom and the spirit of its liberty, should be helped by all the peace—and freedom—loving nations of Asia, Europe, Africa and both Americas.

I would like, however, to send a special plea to three nations. The first is the French nation. I am sure that I am expressing the feelings of all the citizens of Israel when I say that our nation will never forget what France did in this crucial year—a year in which the balance of forces in the Middle East was shifted in favor of our enemies because of the supply of large quantities of superior arms to our most dangerous enemy—to increase Israel's military strength. Many claimed that after the terrible bloodletting of France's heroic war against the German aggressor and invader during the First World War, and after the tragic defeat of that great nation in the Second World War, France's voice in the choir of the nations had ended and its violin had fallen silent in the world orchestra. That was not the case, however. That great nation, the bearer of the beacon of liberty for over 170 years, will yet fulfill a great role in humanity, particularly in these terrible times, when barbarism and servitude, which conceal their designs with fine phrases, are rife.... We say today to the great French nation: stand by us and we will stand by you, for your sake and for ours, for your liberty and ours!

The second plea is addressed to Britain. This month marks almost 40 years since the document known as the Balfour Declaration was published. The verse: "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, 'It is a people that do err in their heart,'" applies to you British. Today we say to the British people, do not try to take away from Israel the fruits of its victory, which were obtained with the blood of its best sons; do not try to take them away, whether by force or by pressure or by threats of pressure and force. If Britain has changed its attitude to our nation, we will act likewise; if Britain treats us badly, we will act likewise; if it treats us well, we will act likewise. This plea is directed not only to that part of the British nation which is represented by its government, but also to the opposition. As far as political principles are concerned, the British opposition has proved to free men throughout the world in these fraught times how free men who believe that they are right, even if they are not necessarily right, do not hesitate even in times of war to oppose their government. In this respect, however, we also call on the opposition in Britain's parliament to leave Israel out of the party-political game in Britain. The entire British nation must understand, even after such a tragic delay, that for thirty-nine years they made very grave mistakes. We paid for them with the blood of six million Jews, but they also paid for them with Britain's standing in the world. Let the entire British nation mend its ways regarding us, regardless of political party, and it will go well with them.

My third plea is to the U.S.A. In the third watch of the night, when our soldiers set out for the desert in order to fight for the nation's existence and future, we heard very hard words, unbearably hard words, from the representative of the great American republic. He said that we

were the aggressors and demanded that Israel be punished. But things can be forgotten. Let America remember its War of Independence, let America remember the natural right which it proclaimed: "to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." This three-part right was given to our nation no less than to the members of the American nation.

This morning we heard that President Eisenhower has been re-elected, with an overwhelming majority, and will lead his nation for the next four years. We say to him, to all his advisors and to the American people: stand as free men behind our nation, which desires freedom and pursues justice, and it will go well with both you and us.

Let us turn our attention to the interim conclusions to be drawn from our army's mighty victory. The first conclusion is: our army did not strike the enemy so that there would be perpetual war between us and Egypt. The objective is a true peace.

The second conclusion—which we recommend—is: we must mete out humane treatment to all Arabs currently under Israel's rule—whether refugees or fugitives. The enemy should be vanquished, but once he has surrendered he must not be hurt; we must show compassion towards him, extend him our hand, help him rebuild his house.

Thirdly, a new danger, the establishment of an international force for the Middle East, has appeared on the horizon. For obvious reasons I am not prepared today, in public, to analyze in detail the danger this force—if established—represents for our nation. It is our duty, however, to draw the nation's attention to the fact that the intention may not be solely as regards the south but also to another armistice line; it may not be decisive that we will not allow that force into our sovereign area. Of course we will not let it in. The danger lies in the fact that others may let it in. And then, behind the wall of the foreign international force, our enemies will once again be sure that no harm will befall them and they will continue with their vigorous preparations to attack us once more, in geographical and strategic conditions which are unfavorable to us.

The main conclusion is: "there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." Mr Speaker, Knesset Members, how our hearts swelled when we heard the IDF's announcement about the liberation of the Gaza Strip. Our army said: part of the homeland, which was torn away from it, has returned to its bosom. We give praise and thanks for having been privileged to hear those words, but if Gaza was a town of our forefathers which was torn away from the homeland, what is Jerusalem, what is Hebron, what is Bethlehem?

No longer will it be said in Israel, when we demand a campaign to liberate the land of our forefathers: "aggression," "expansion," "that permanent border has been determined in the Rhodes agreements, and will remain where it is." Let the whole nation draw the conclusion from the liberation of the conquered area in the south. Part of the homeland which is under foreign rule does not cease to be part of the homeland.

Alien conquest does not annul our eternal right to the land of our fathers and our sons.

The work is not ended, there remains yet very much land to be possessed, and any campaign undertaken in order to liberate the conquered areas of our homeland also constitutes use of our right to legal, national self-defense; that is also a way of maintaining our eternal right.

The whole nation must unite today around that awareness, and then, with the help of Divine Providence, we may all—the Government, the Knesset, tens of thousands of our people—be privileged to ascend the Temple Mount in order to give thanks and praise to the God of Israel for having taken us out of slavery into true freedom in this generation.

What we have said was true and honest. Only three weeks ago, at the conclusion of the political debate in the Knesset, we proposed passing a resolution affirming Israel's national, legal right to self-defense... justifying strategic campaigns undertaken at the opportune moment and describing Nasser's dictatorship as a threat to the entire free world, not only Israel....

When we told the nation that there was no point waiting until the enemy was ready to make a concerted effort to destroy us, with the advantage of superior and more numerous weapons and the element of surprise, but that we should strike him while there was still time and wrest the weapons away from him...; when we told our people that a campaign of liberation of that nature would not only cost us less in money but also save Jewish lives...; when we said to the nation that against the background of the Suez dispute...there was a chance that Israel...would receive aid...from our enemy's enemy; when we informed the people that we would not necessarily have to stand alone against that common enemy; when we told the nation that this was the way to good relations and the prevention of bloodshed; when we said all those things, we were not being misleading. What we said was true and honest.

But we must not let this go to our heads, and we will not engage in any dispute today. We know that this is not the end of the matter. Difficult trials and days of great anxiety still await us. And just as our army—with the nation behind it—stood firm, so will we have to stand united, especially in difficult times.

Today we have emerged from darkness into dim dawn. If we are capable of using our national right to self-defense as it is understood today by the best men in the world and by the entire nation; and if we are capable of insisting on Israel's right to the land of its fathers; and if we are capable of maintaining the wonderful national unity which was revealed around our heroic sons—with the help of the God of Israel we will emerge from the dimness into a great light.

P. Bernstein (General Zionists): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset. Repetitions of expressions of admiration for our army's victory and of

our participation in the sorrow of the families of the soldiers who fell in battle could weaken the impact of the emotions thus expressed. Nevertheless, I would like to say that this campaign...will go down in history as one of the greatest military actions ever seen....We thank the IDF for its perfect planning and execution....At this time we should all give special thanks to the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, who laid the foundations for our military strength, worked ceaselessly to improve it and was capable of employing it at the right time and in the appropriate circumstances.

Nor should we overlook the moral standard and maturity of the entire public which, in the hours before the decision...maintained perfect calm, set all quarrels aside and, when the battle was over, did not become drunk with victory.

It is still too early to assess to the full what effect our military achievement will have on the political and security situation in the Middle East. There is no doubt, however, that the chief aim of the campaign—increasing our security, especially by placing the threat to our existence at a distance from us, a threat which was characterized by the military organization around us under Egypt's command—was achieved. For the moment, we note with great satisfaction that important areas from which our security was threatened daily only a few steps away from our settlements have been restored to the homeland, and the areas from which the Egyptian army was driven out will doubtless constitute a guarantee for the state's security.

Special importance should be attached to our having broken the blockade on Eilat...and we will doubtless be mindful of all the conclusions deriving from that liberation in the political struggle which will also focus on our military achievements....

More than at the time of the deal to supply heavy arms to Egypt by the Soviet government, and more than when the Suez crisis broke out, the eyes of the world were turned to the Middle East as the place from which world peace was threatened. We share the anxiety of the world, even though facts and deeds raise doubts as to whether it is genuine. From the outset, however, this anxiety was connected with a growing threat to Israel's security and existence.

I would like to note with satisfaction the attitude of the French government and nation, which displayed a full understanding of our position and were the first to afford us the greatest aid in the most effective way.

We greatly regret the fact that the mighty government which has made the call for world peace the foremost slogan of its policy turned the Sinai Peninsula into an enormous arsenal, the object of which was evident to it, and evinced less understanding than any other world factor to the threat to our existence, continuing to behave in an extremely unfriendly manner towards us. We do not determine our attitude in for-

eign policy on the basis of a country's internal regime, but there is no reason to regret the fact that we have no ties with the regime in Russia. What we regret is its government's attitude towards us.

The U.S. government has evinced a negative attitude, at least towards the military campaign we were forced to undertake, and was a party to the condemnation of it by the Security Council of the U.N. The governments of the U.S. have generally treated us sympathetically, and have extended us economic aid....We hope that it is only the fear of a wider conflagration which has temporarily clouded its judgment, and that the reason does not lie in our defensive action. We trust that upon reconsidering the matter the U.S. government will realize how necessary it was....

The British Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, was not only the first of all international factors to discern the danger of annihilation which threatened us, forcing us to take the action we took; he was also the first to note that the armistice lines between us and Egypt could not be those which divided two countries. Consequently, the Foreign Office spokesman's statement that we should immediately withdraw behind those lines is incomprehensible.

In referring to international factors we should note that our Government's tendency to rely in its foreign policy on socialist parties abroad has proved a disappointment once more. This is borne out by the attitude of the British Labor Party and the resolutions of condemnation passed against us at the Bombay Conference. The socialist parties of the world determine their stands on their countries' foreign policies on the basis of national considerations, which may or may not be right, but not on the basis of international socialist solidarity.

Troops from Syria and/or Iraq as well as Saudi Arabia have—it is rumored—entered the neighboring kingdom of Jordan. This violates the status quo, and although these troop movements do not have the same dangerous significance they would have had before the Egyptian army was defeated by the IDF, we must nevertheless view them with concern, and our Government must be on its guard.

The U.N. Observers made an effort...to end the border clashes, as the murders inside Israel by guerrilla bands were termed. Now we have been told that a U.N.-sponsored international police force, whose task has been variously described, is to be established. We fully agree with international supervision of the Suez Canal by an international police force. We oppose the idea of any international police force operating on our territory. It has now been proved that if the authorities in the neighboring countries do not organize incursions, there are no incursions. It does not depend on any police force, and if there are no incursions there will be no reactions.

The armistice lines with Egypt have ceased to exist. We aspire for peace with Egypt, as we do with the other Arab countries, and we hope that

the armistice lines with them will be replaced by peace agreements. Perhaps the time has come for self-examination and reconsideration in all the Arab countries. We will be the first to welcome this.

...

I. Raphael (Hapoel Hamizrahi and Hamizrahi): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, while we are still rejoicing at the wonderful victory gained by our soldiers, and while we are still bewailing the loyal, heroic men who fell in defense of their country, we are unable to fully grasp the tremendous event of the last few days, which seems to be a miracle from heaven....

All we can do right now is to voice the nation's joy at the miracle of our deliverance, and to congratulate the Government for having made the right decision at the right time, the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, whom Divine Providence has appointed to fulfill a historic mission in conducting the war of defense and liberation; the General Staff, those who planned and implemented so well; but first and foremost we must say a prayer of thanks to the Guardian of Israel, who preserves the nation's existence so that it may fulfill its mission in the world and among the nations.

Only someone who has seen the war fronts, even after the fighting has ended, and has observed the enemy's preparations, the kinds and quantities of weapons, the plans to attack us near our borders which were undoubtedly prepared with help from abroad, and probably with the aid of former Nazi officers, knows what the enemy sought to do to us, and would have done had he not been defeated. Anyone who has heard expert explanations and details of the fighting knows that God Almighty wrought miracles, many miracles, for us, when we faced the evil confronting us.

It is a mistake to think that the enemy did not fight. He fought valiantly, he entrenched himself and defended himself, but eventually he broke, because in this case man was fighting against machine, spirit and volunteering against orders and commands, soldiers who knew they were fighting for their lives and the existence of their people for lack of choice against those sent in an arrogant and malicious military escapade. Once again, we demonstrated the greatness of our army, most of which does not consist of professional soldiers, being reservists who work in other fields, men who love freedom and peace, and proved that our army is one of internal freedom imbued with the highest Jewish and human ideals.

Alongside the honor and praise which the IDF deserves, it is our duty to praise the fortitude, calm and discipline of the civilian rear. There was no fear of danger or panic, nor was there undue rejoicing at our victory and the enemy's downfall, but it discharged its crucial task honorably, as befits a great nation, a special people, at a moment of greatness.

Knesset Members, no one can delude themselves that the victory on the battlefield solves our problems. We must still be fully on our guard, because they are still sharpening their weapons on the other side of our borders. Our soldiers may be called upon to fulfill another defensive mission soon in the east and the north. Before us lies a difficult, complex and wearying political campaign. Many world politicians are not prepared to admit that we were right to act as we did.... Each one, out of their own interests, will cast aspersions upon us for doing things which they allow themselves...judging us by criteria different to those by which they judge themselves. And although official, professional politicians do not always act in accordance with the dictates of their conscience, what is really astonishing is the position adopted by certain leaders of Britain's Labor Party who, for internal reasons, opposed our just cause, thereby raising doubts as to their adherence to justice and honesty in international decisions. Are they still unaware of the true nature of the military junta in Egypt? Does the appearance of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in the personal equipment of Nasser's soldiers and the Nazi planning of the battles still fail to remove the film from their eyes so that they can see what was really going on here? Do they, like the others, ignore the fact that our victory brought freedom and relief not only to us but also to other peoples, Arab and Moslem peoples, whose independence the insane Egyptian tyrant endangered in his aspiration to rule them? In their heart of hearts they know the truth and welcome our liberating action, even if they will not admit it publicly.

We stand before difficult political attacks by the various interest groups which, when combined, will constitute a tough opponent. This time we will require a great deal of courage on the political front, perhaps no less than on the battlefield. We will have to withstand pressure and threats.

The areas which were sanctified with the blood of our sons were sanctified for the future as well as for the present. The Egyptians have no greater historic right to those areas than the People of the Book, for whom the event at Mount Sinai determined its entire future course. Our devotion to the U.N. as an institution of peace and our gratitude to it for its unforgettable part in our establishment are well-known. We remain faithful to its Charter and founding principles as well as to its basic essence, and we will support that institution whenever it acts in accordance with them. Nevertheless, we must fight within its framework and with the help of our friends against any deviation from the fulfillment of its task. The leaders of the U.N. must also recognize the new situations which have been created, and should not cling to obsolete tools. The Armistice Agreements, which served a temporary purpose, should make way for a peace agreement between us and the Arab peoples. Peace will come into being provided the great nations want it. We want it, let the Arab peoples also want it, for their own benefit and welfare.

There are worrying aspects to the political campaign, which has already begun. We wanted to congratulate certain countries—France and Britain—on the understanding they have evinced for our position, as expressed in speeches and statements made by their leaders, and we entertained the hope that this would mark the beginning of a new era in the relations between us. But we challenge the new nuances in Britain's official statements, the hints that we will be asked to withdraw our forces from the areas we conquered even before we sit down to negotiate a peace agreement.

With all the moral force of a small, peace-loving nation whose only aspiration is to be allowed to live and build its future, we reject the threats of the mighty Soviet Power and the hostile attitude it displays towards us....The U.S.S.R. played a part in Egypt's defeat and downfall by giving it arms and encouraging the arrogant stance of the tyrant, embroiling him in schemes of war instead of directing him to heal his nation both socially and economically. Will the Soviets continue to interfere in events in this region, to the detriment of all who dwell here?...

While mobilizing the aid of all men of good will in the world—especially among small nations which fear for their existence as we do for ours—we must demand that the large nations respect our existence and independence, even if we are a small nation. We will assail world public opinion in order to prove our justice and our love of peace; in order to convince it that our war is solely one of survival and that we have no intentions of conquest and imperialist expansion, and that we will make every effort to achieve peace with the Arabs, because we do not hate them. Incidentally, anyone who sees how the Arabs of Gaza feel and conduct themselves under Israeli rule, cannot help comparing this with the very different situation which might have arisen had Israel been conquered by the enemy.

We will have to appeal to all groups and nations. We will seek special understanding from those nations which still adhere to the Bible, requesting that they display their true feelings to the People of the Book which is renewing itself in the Land of the Bible. Our information campaign must encompass friends and rivals, including friends of yesterday who have disappointed us. We should also try to find ways to people and groups in Arab and Moslem countries who may also be starting to understand what they have not realized till now.

The Government and the entire nation must stand firm in the face of the renewed dangers. There is no doubt that our nation in the diaspora, which understands our struggle, will stand behind us so that our victory may be established and the existence of the state assured. This is a time for unity, because the battle continues.

May the true and noble brotherhood which revealed itself on the battlefield and the refreshing national unity which the nation displayed during the days of danger and war shine their great light on the nation

in the coming time, when we will have to rescue the country from political dangers and set the ship of state afloat on the wide ocean, that it may serve as a shining beacon for our people in the diaspora and a light unto all the nations, for a life of lasting happiness and peace.

I. Galili (Ahdut Ha'Avoda-Po'alei Zion): The nation in Israel and in the diaspora is proud of and grateful to the IDF which, by striking the Egyptian armies, saved Israel from the danger of physical destruction. Eight years after the battles of 1948 the Egyptian tyrant placed a huge force at the southern approaches of our country, with the intention of invading and destroying it. Huge amounts of weapons from Britain, and even more from the U.S.S.R., were amassed systematically in the Sinai desert. New roads were built with the intention of enabling the troops to reach the heart of Israel; new airfields were built with runways for jets, so that the enemy's planes would be nearer the center of Israel. Huge bases were built for storing ammunition, food and engineering equipment; workshops for repairing tanks and vehicles were set up, and all this together constituted an immense network intended to bring about our downfall.

But the IDF headed off the danger, surprised the enemy, cast the tank and its rider to the sand, paralyzed and smashed cannon, and saved us from the awful fate that would have been ours had we not acted with foresight.

Now the spaces of the Sinai desert have been cleansed. The Gaza Strip from where incursions came has been liberated, we occupy Rafah and El-Arish, and in one sweep the IDF has broken the blockade of Eilat....

It is splendid to see the pride and joy of the officers, the planners, the Air Force, the armored corps, the Navy and all the services. Once more we drink the heady wine of the battles of defense and liberation of 1948. For me it was a great experience to see the symbolism of this. It may not be chance that those same officers who, in the final stages of the War of Independence, reached the outskirts of Rafah and El-Arish, conquered Abu-Ageila and got as far as Bir-Hama but had to withdraw because of pressure from abroad, now commanded units which were far better equipped and conquered those very places and continued south.

Our victory was no miracle but the fruit of the nation's spirit and ability, the outcome of the IDF's planning and courage, the result of meticulous work all the years, of ceaseless efforts to obtain defensive weapons, of looking ahead and of the Israel Government's ability and daring in making the right decision at the right moment. We are proud of our share in that decision.

The Sinai desert has been completely cleansed of the invading army. Now one can see how the Egyptian people was milked unnecessarily to buy offensive weapons for that Nazi tyrant's accursed and shameful escapade. The Egyptian masses may have learned the lesson

that they would be well-advised not to place their army and their sons at the command of that megalomaniac who has brought disaster upon them. We certainly have a lesson to learn. We must never again allow the Sinai desert to become a launching pad for an invasion. With all our military and political strength and with all our love of justice and hatred of bloodshed, our nation has made up its mind that the Sinai desert will be an area of peace and defense for Israel, not one from which Israel may be attacked. Not only can we no longer agree to the re-deployment of the Egyptians in Sinai, but we must firmly oppose the stationing of foreign troops in Sinai, so that Israel can never be attacked from there again.

But even though the enemy in the south has been vanquished we must not disregard the dangers threatening us in the north and the east, even though we are now entitled to regard ourselves as safer because those in the east who wish us harm will think twice and three times before attacking us.

The Prime Minister was right in saying here today that there is a distinction between the Armistice Agreements with Jordan and Syria and those with Egypt, which were buried even before the battle began.

But we must not divert our attention from the fact that the political basis upon which the Armistice Agreements between us and Jordan rest has changed radically with the entry of the Iraqi, Saudi Arabian and Syrian armies into Jordan. The Armistice Agreements are a two-way concept and Israel cannot be expected to keep them if the other side does not.

The Sinai Campaign was forced upon us by our need to defend ourselves, and we emerged victorious because of our desire to live as a free nation and maintain our independence....Those who act in the cruellest manner where any danger to themselves is concerned but ignore the basic needs of our physical existence, attempting to libel us as serving foreign interests or as having expansionist aims, mock us. No false accusations will deter us from self-defense. As in the past, so in the future, too, we have no desire to fall into the false abyss between spirit and matter, even though we are the people of the spirit. Only if we exist will there be any point in our adherence to ideals. We are not prepared to admit the truth of universal, international socialist ideals if they serve to justify our destruction. We believe in human and socialist values and maintain them only because we exist, preserve our independence and defend our freedom. We can fulfill our mission in human society as a free, peace-loving nation only if we defend ourselves from destruction, even if it is disguised as progress.

In the heat of battle we feel how bitter, cruel and accursed war is. We feel that this time, when the flames of war are still burning, should teach even those in our region who wish us ill how necessary and possible peace is. It is at a time like this that Israel should take courageous

and appropriate political steps, revealing the full extent of its readiness to put an end to the unfortunate situation in which we find ourselves on all sides, and acting in order to settle affairs in our region in such a way that nations will not be exploited by others, and so that nations may live alongside one another in brotherhood, working together for progress and prosperity.

M. Ya'ari (Mapam): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, we are now summing up a brief chapter in the State of Israel's struggle for its existence and its future; we are summing up a brilliant military campaign which is virtually unparalleled in world history. We may first and foremost congratulate ourselves on the fact that with the liberation of the Gaza Strip we have removed a malignant thorn from Israel's side. Now that that has been achieved, I hope that—with the exception of one party group in this House—no party group will suggest that we put that malignant thorn back with our own hands, just as no party group will propose that we negate the glorious campaign that opened the blockade on Eilat.

Mapam has not concealed its view, to which it adheres still today, that in the long run peace, however shaky, is preferable. But the die was cast, and we kept our long-standing...vow to stand alongside the nation fighting to defend itself and alongside the IDF. We did not cease to state our opinion in public at all times, but when the die was cast we bore full responsibility for the Government's acts and the campaign in front of us. We will bear that responsibility particularly in the face of our many critics, from the State Department in Washington to the world of progress and socialism.

We were told yesterday that while warning England, France and Israel, the U.S.S.R. hastened to recall its ambassador from Israel and threatened our State's very existence and future. That is the dubious uniqueness with which, to our sorrow, even the mighty socialist state treats our people and our country.

Both avowed enemies and friends condemn the IDF's heroic campaign. Even our Labour colleagues joined in the chorus. The following three claims have been made: firstly, that during the last few years there has been a breathing space, and that the armed conflict erupted just when Egypt was about to agree to a solution to the Suez Canal conflict which would have satisfied everyone. This hypocritical contention was made even by our "friend," the well-known "man of peace," Mr. Foster Dulles. It is true that until the last day before the outbreak of hostilities between us, we heard from the Egyptians that freedom of navigation would be granted to all countries, except Israel. But, as is well-known, an unpleasant stain such as denying freedom of navigation to Israel is easily ignored by diplomats or, at the most, eased by passing non-comittal resolutions which tyrants like Nasser simply throw into the garbage.

The second contention is that despite the reduction of tension we invaded Egypt's territory and attacked it although it had done nothing. We, who have always opposed initiated war, must reject that one-sided condemnation. The truth is that not only did the government of Egypt fail to keep its commitments arising from the Armistice Agreement, and not only did it cease to declare that it continued to maintain a state of war with us, but it even openly developed the most despicable and cowardly form of war...that of murderous ambushes directed from on high, the method of the *fedayeen*. That method, which was intended to make us tire of our existence as a nation in our own land and make our daily life hell, did not distinguish between young and old, women and men, spewing death and destruction in workers' homes and immigrant villages, and was not even condemned by the U.N., which condemned our acts of retaliation. Nasser and his allies announced day and night that they were determined to wipe us off the face of the earth and that they would strike when it suited them, while the Powers which desired the Cairo tyrant's friendship vied to supply unending quantities of first-rate arms of the heaviest and most aggressive type.

It does not console us that the Stalin tanks were preceded by Britain's Centurions. In any event, the enormous arsenals situated at all stations between Suez and El-Arish, as well as between Rafah and Gaza, prove in retrospect that the Egyptian tyrant, who mercilessly persecutes communists and men of peace in his country, did not seriously intend to direct the mountains of weapons he received from the Czech arms deal against those Western Powers which had initiated the Baghdad Pact. He sought to turn all the weapons from his deals solely against us.

When an Egyptian general was chosen, before the IDF's armed campaign, to command the armies of Egypt, Syria and Jordan, and these allies used the opportunity to declare their aggressive intentions against us, we did not hear any reservations of any kind from the Powers which were competing for the dictator's friendship. Now they disassociate themselves from the affair, and sixty hands are raised against us in the U.N.

The third contention against us is that we did not utilize the path of negotiations before acting as we did....Those who preach negotiations know that for years the Government of Israel reiterated its policy of being ready to enter into negotiations with any of the Arab countries around us at any time, with the object of turning the shaky Armistice Agreement into a firm peace treaty. It took only six days for the enemy to flee before our army, and once again we heard our Government's clarion call stating that we have ceased firing and are ready for peace negotiations with Egypt and any other country....

I have no doubt that we are not attracted by the conquest of territory which is not ours. We have freed our southern border of the provocations

of the Egyptians and the *fedayeen* by liberating the Gaza Strip from Egypt, which invaded it in 1948. We have restored freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Eilat and we hope that our right to pass through the Suez Canal will now be upheld. We demand that the Arab blockade and boycott of our products and of transport associated with our country be ended. In a word, we demand relations of peace and good neighborliness. We have never heard a representative of our country speak against the nationalization of the Suez Canal. All that we demanded—and unfortunately not only Egypt ignored this—was the restoration of everyone's navigation rights, including Israel's.

To the best of my knowledge, we made no pact with France and Britain. They have objectives of their own in this armed quarrel with Egypt. Why should we look for any evidence more convincing than that given by the Prime Minister of Britain? He has already washed his hands of us, declaring while he bombed the Canal that Israel was unjustified in entering the Sinai Peninsula. We have no illusions regarding Britain's intentions. It is not so long since Britain's representative at the U.N. attacked us most savagely. If in this instance of our armed struggle with Egypt Britain used its veto in the Security Council against our condemnation as the aggressor, it did not do so because of its love for us. Let us not forget that in his famous speech at Guildhall the British Prime Minister was the first to hint at his desire to "mediate" in order to impose a peace on us based on a compromise with the Partition Plan of 29 November 1947. Yesterday the British spokesman hastened to reveal that that statement by Eden, which clashes with Israel's territorial integrity, has not yet fallen by the wayside.

To our regret, the socialist countries also hint at a compromise with the Partition Plan. The demand for direct negotiations without prior conditions has recently been replaced by the call for imposed mediation, which is totally against us. The tone was set in Bandung. That was the first time when Israel's problems were dealt with in our absence. In Bandung the demand for unconditional direct negotiations with us was replaced by an anti-Israel resolution passed in accordance with Arab demands. This was followed by a change in the climate. It is hardly surprising, then, that the first and only communist minister in any Arab country, namely Jordan, announced upon taking office that they would never conduct negotiations with "criminal" Israel. That is also the mood that was generated in Cairo by Nasser, the hero of Bandung.

Now they are preaching at us again that we should replace our aggressive reaction with an attempt to negotiate. To our regret, however, no one is speaking clearly even now. We are told to negotiate, but not what for. There is only one kind of negotiations which can serve the interests of peace in the region and the whole world, and that is direct negotiations without prior conditions....

...After the IDF's brilliant campaign there are still difficulties and dangers before us....Once again, as in the War of Independence, we have proved our superiority in battle. We have proved that we can win a lightning strike. But we now confront the difficult task of winning the battle for peace. The battle for peace is a long one, it has been going on for eight years, since the end of the War of Independence, and we are still knocking at closed doors. Those who condemned us as aggressors in the U.N. did precious little during the past eight years to bring us nearer our goal—stable peace. It is evident that that difficult task will rest on our shoulders in the future too.

What has our experience taught us? That our neighbors have one weapon which has served them far more efficiently and well than any arms deal with the West and East together, and that weapon is hatred. They have proved that they can cultivate hatred stubbornly, and that it constitutes a far more effective barrier than all the arms in their possession. For us it is a matter of life and death whether we manage to break through the barrier of hatred and put an end to the dream of unsatisfied revenge. We have only one way to break through that barrier, and that is the brotherhood of nations.

After the victorious test of battle chauvinist phrases will doubtless be bandied about at every opportunity. We must warn all those who love our country, the masses in the urban and rural areas, who have once again revealed their readiness to make any sacrifice, not to be led astray by clever patriotic phrases and not to become prideful at this testing time. We will pave the path to peace if we reduce hatred, build bridges between nations and individuals and undertake daily constructive and human acts of justice and charity.

With the attachment of the Gaza Strip to the homeland the Arab minority in Israel has grown to almost half a million persons. Henceforth we must deal with this minority in our country, where we decide our own fate, as we would have other nations deal with us. Only if we can imbue the members of the Arab minority in Israel with a sense of security in their existence, their future and their human and civilian stature, will we have any hope of making a path to the hearts of the neighboring Arab peoples, thereby bringing the peace we desire nearer.

Knesset Members, the international horizon around us is still fairly gloomy. But greater than any danger which threatens us from outside is that which awaits us if...we are unable to make the effort to break the barrier of hatred and isolation around us. After two thousand years of exile we are returning to that great continent, the cradle of civilization, Asia. That continent is currently undergoing a mighty struggle for human freedom and national independence. It would be an unimaginable tragedy if the peoples of that continent were to continue forever to regard us as an alien body, just as it would be our greatest victory if in the years to come we could combine our war of national and

socialist independence with that of the peoples of that immense and ancient continent.

...

S. Mikunis (Maki): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, Israel has never known such a fateful and dangerous time as this....The efforts made by the Government and its supporters to conceal from the nation the pit it has dug for it by invading Egypt are in vain. It is not joy but deep anxiety which all Israel feels now.

The war which the Government began against Egypt on October 29 does not serve any national interest of Israel's but endangers the country. This is an unjust war, which was advocated by Herut. It will be recalled that this idea was rejected and condemned only three weeks ago, during the political debate in the Knesset, by almost all the party groups. The Prime Minister himself said then that Israel would not initiate a war. It is obvious that the Government misled the nation and embroiled Israel in a dangerous military and political escapade, the end of which cannot yet be seen. The attack on Egypt does not solve any problem for Israel, and merely creates new ones and greater isolation....The attack was not intended to enhance Israel's security but to provide an excuse for the armed intervention of the British and the French, helping them to return by force of arms to their lost positions on the Suez Canal and in the Middle East.

The Ben-Gurion Government constituted the sole factor in the entire world...which supported the rulers of France and Britain, who are isolated in their scheme to attack Egypt and conquer the Suez Canal....It is characteristic that in no speech did the Prime Minister mention his shameful plot with hated colonialism and his despicable service to the British and French imperialists.

By placing Israel at the service of the imperialist pirates in the Middle East, the Government generates hatred of Israel among the Arab peoples as well as in Asia and Africa, among all those who love peace and independence, endangering our future in this part of the world.

The aggression...of Britain, France and Israel has been vigorously condemned by 93 percent of the members of the U.N., was censured at the Asian Socialist Conference which Mapai attended and aroused protest demonstrations and strikes in many countries, including by Britain's Labor Party and the working and other classes in France.

It should be noted that only a few days after the start of the war, after the Government of Israel had created the excuse for the imperialists' military intervention at Suez, the British Foreign Office announced that it would force Israel to withdraw behind the armistice lines....The French imperialists, Israel's new patrons, will say something similar in another day or two. That custom is particularly prevalent among them just now, when both the British and the French imperialists are be-

ing driven out of Asia and Africa and their colonialist system is about to be completely destroyed.

The Government tries to conceal its service to imperialism by talking about territorial conquests, yet it is not territory which Israel lacks, however, but understanding and peace with the Arab peoples and freedom from dependence upon imperialism. A policy of territorial conquest is a two-edged sword, since it may create the precedent and basis for territorial conquests in the reverse direction, by the neighboring countries of Israel. Force cannot be the basis for peaceful coexistence between Israel and the Arabs. The time is past when it was possible to repress nations by force of arms and hold on to conquered territory on a long-term basis.

(From the floor: Like in Hungary!)

Hungary will not help you solve Israel's problems.

The war which the Government began against Egypt was so opposed to Israel's national interests that the Government had to find all kinds of wild excuses for it. No sensible person can accept the claim that the attack on Egypt was a "defensive" act. The murder of innocent Israelis by the *fedayeen*, which was condemned by the entire Israeli public, does not justify an aggressive war. This line of argument would justify similar moves by the neighboring countries, in reaction to the raid on Kalkilya, for example.

The relations between Israel and the Arabs will be settled by peaceful methods, not on the battlefield....The attack on Egypt...was an escapade, an irresponsible gamble with the fate and future of our people, with the sacred subject of peace. An aggressive war does not solve any problem, it merely complicates existing ones and creates new ones....

The experience of recent years proves that aggression is doomed to failure. That was the case in Korea, in Indo-China, in Morocco, in Tunisia—

(From the floor: In Hungary!)

M. Sneh (Maki): Who are you defending? Mindszenty? Horthy?

S. Mikunis (Maki): We have enough headaches of our own; don't go to Budapest, it's too far away.

B. Idelson (Mapai): You go there.

S. Mikunis (Maki): Are you sending me there? I came from there before you did. She's sending me to Hungary!

The same will happen with regard to Algeria, Cyprus and Egypt. It is not clever and it is dangerous for Israel's future to ignore the basic change in political forces in the world to the detriment of imperialism. It is not clever and it is dangerous for the Government to disregard the readiness of large and small countries to help attacked nations to defend themselves and ensure their national independence.

...In the Prime Minister's seven points he said...that Israel would never agree to allow a foreign force into its territory. It seems to me...that the only way to achieve this is not to hold onto foreign conquered territory. The statement that Israel will not fight any Arab country unless it attacks Israel has been confuted by events....

To the best of our knowledge, it is very difficult to accept the Government's assertions regarding its desire for peace with Egypt if it wages war against it and conquers territory. Such declarations smack of hypocrisy. The Prime Minister says that he is ready for unconditional negotiations with Egypt...but he himself is imposing conditions...on the other side by demanding that it recognize the fait accompli of territorial conquest and annexation by force of arms. The Prime Minister disregarded the basic fact that the Government of Israel has sabotaged the chances of peace negotiations with the Arab peoples by supporting the imperialists against the struggle for independence of the neighboring peoples and by stubbornly refusing to consider the just national rights of the Palestinian Arab people.

Anyone who really and truly wants peace must know that one does not get it by attacks, raids, conquests and annexations....The only way to peace is to abandon a policy of force, to consider the just national rights of other nations and to be ready to make compromises....

In order to amend the immense damage caused Israel by the invasion of Egypt, in order to prevent developments which are dangerous for our people and our state, the Government should, in our view, respond to the U.N.'s call for the withdrawal of the IDF. The grave warning and important advice of the Soviet Prime Minister should also be taken into account in view of the tireless efforts of Soviet policy to ensure the peace and independence of all the nations of the Middle East.

A. Herzfeld (Mapai): That's the whole "truth."

S. Mikunis (Maki): Because the U.S.S.R. is the only Power which has formulated just and correct guidelines, as in its statement of April 17 this year regarding the peaceful settlement of the Palestine problem.

Distinguished Knesset, on the evening of October 29, when the attack on Egypt at the order of Ben-Gurion's Government became known, our Communist party group in the Knesset proposed a vote of no confidence in the Government. We hereby revive our proposal: for the sake of Israel's security, for the sake of Israel's future, for the sake of national peace and independence, the Knesset should express no confidence in the Government of war headed by Ben-Gurion.

...

Salah Hassan Hanifas (Progress and Labor): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the events of the last few days are undoubtedly the direct result of the misguided and dangerous policy of the Arab rulers. It is highly regrettable that the Arab rulers have not yet properly assessed

the new situation in the region, and do not see—or do not want to see—where their people's true benefit lies. They continue to think and act in terms of old, outdated concepts, and by their stubborn refusal to see the situation as it really is they bring one disaster after another upon their people.

It is patently evident that Egypt's first obligation now is to learn the lesson of recent events and abandon the misguided path it has taken till now. For its own good it must abandon incitement, threats and the illusion that it can destroy Israel.

The other Arab rulers, who have not yet encountered the IDF and have not yet experienced the awesome events which were Egypt's lot, should spare their peoples and their countries similar, pointless disasters. In the final event their eyes will be opened to see that the welfare and prosperity of our region will be achieved only through a true and permanent peace between the Arab countries and Israel.

At this great and historic moment I would like to ask Allah to be merciful to the brave heroes who fell on the field of battle, the field of honor, heroism and duty, and to comfort and strengthen their families. I congratulate the Minister of Defense and the Chief of Staff, as well as the entire IDF, which within a few days completed this splendid military campaign which guaranteed Israel's welfare and security.

I hereby give you my assurance as a Druse and a soldier that all Israel's Druse inhabitants...are glad to mingle their blood with that of their Jewish brethren on the battlefield. It is a great honor for us, and this is our path forever.

...

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: There are two proposals to sum up the debate, one from Maki and the other from all the other party groups. I give the floor to MK Sneh.

M. Sneh (Maki): On behalf of the Israel Communist Party in the Knesset I submit the following proposal: Because of the military attack on Egypt; because of the service to the enslaving colonialism of the French and the British; because it has put peace with the Arab peoples—the desire of all Jews—further away; because it has engendered hatred of Israel among the peoples of Asia and Africa; because it has isolated Israel in the world; because it has endangered Israel's security and future—the Knesset expresses no confidence in the Government of war headed by Ben-Gurion.

The Vote

Those in favor of Maki's proposal of
no confidence in the Government 3

Those against 87

(The proposal was not adopted.)

A. Govrin (Mapai): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, on behalf of all the Knesset party groups except for Maki, namely, the members of the Coalition (Mapai, Ahdut Ha'Avoda-Po'alei Zion, Mapam, Hapoel Hamizrahi and Hamizrahi and the Progressive Party) and the party groups of Herut, the General Zionists, the Democratic Party of Israeli Arabs, Progress and Labor, Agriculture and Development, I hereby propose the following resolutions:

A. The Knesset accepts with esteem the statement made by the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense on 7 November 1956 about the military and political campaign.

B. The Knesset and the nation send their warm congratulations to the IDF from Dan to Yotva on its victory in the Sinai war and which, by its preparedness, ability and spirit of sacrifice, completely defeated the Egyptian enemy. May God bless the IDF....

The Knesset bows its head in memory of the IDF soldiers who fell for the life of the State of Israel, and expresses its condolences to the families which lost their loved ones, who are dear to everyone in Israel.

The Knesset wishes all the wounded soldiers a complete and speedy recovery.

The Vote

Those in favor of MK A. Govrin's resolution 88

Those against 3

The Speaker, J. Sprinzak: The resolution is passed by 88 votes of all the party groups to 3 of the Communists.

(The Knesset Members sing the national anthem, *Hatikva*.)