

*Arab-Israeli War*

There is no evidence, I am unhappy to say, that they are willing to do so even today. Here lies the essential tragedy of the situation.

The other tragedy, of course, is represented by the life of the Palestinian refugees, a condition that exercises the conscience of every civilized person. The war of 1948 produced refugees, whatever may have been the cause, and the 1967 war aggravated that situation. Throughout the period, I suggest to hon. members and I suggest to the people of the world, there have been only two possible solutions to this festering problem of the Palestinian refugees. The one solution was to settle the refugees in the areas available in Egypt and Jordan. This could have been done before now and can still be done.

To such a solution of that problem Israel would have had, and has, a moral duty to contribute immensely in funds and in technical help which its people are eminently qualified to provide. From personal conversations with the Prime Minister of Israel and members of her cabinet, I am convinced that the country was, and is, prepared to undertake its full share of this responsibility as part, and only as part, of a peace settlement in the area.

But this solution has been rejected not only by the Palestinians but by the Arab states and by all Palestinian organizations. Instead, they insist on regaining the lands which they left. I cannot fail to appreciate their desire, the cause of it and their frustrations at being away from what used to be their home. I do appreciate that. But what does their demand mean in simple, true, honest terms? Again, it means a determination to eliminate Israel. That is the only thing. The demand of the Palestinian organizations, no matter how sincere they may be, means the elimination of Israel and a plan to eliminate Israel as a Jewish society. I know they do not use that language. They have learned the language of international debate; they talk instead of ridding Palestine of Zionists. Surely this cannot and does not fool anybody.

Strictly speaking, there are Zionists outside Israel. Inside Israel there are only Israelis. Or, if anyone insists on using the term Zionist, then every one of the 2½ million to 3 million Jews within Israel is a Zionist, and when you talk about ridding Israel of Zionists you talk about ridding it of its entire Jewish population. This is the clear meaning of these terms used by some people who attempt to confuse and by others who innocently accept those terms. This, of course, is not acceptable to anybody who believes Israel has a right to exist.

So we come back full circle to the central issue, the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state, as a Jewish society. It is in this context that the war must be seen and that the attitude of nations to that war must be judged. It is said by some that what the Arab states want now is to regain the territory captured by Israel in the 1967 war, that this justified their breach of the ceasefire agreement of June, 1967, and of the Security Council resolution 242 of November that year.

I hope that the Arab spokesmen are honest in their statements about limited objectives, but I cannot blame the Israelis for doubting them. I, myself doubt the reliability of these statements, first because limited war objectives are invariably abandoned by those who are victorious in them, and second because war was not necessary for

these limited objectives. Peace negotiations could have achieved them without the agony and destruction of war. Security Council resolution 242 called for such negotiations. It did not call for unilateral withdrawal by Israel from the occupied territories. It called for withdrawal as part of peace negotiations and a peace treaty which gave Israel secure and recognized boundaries, as it gave to the states around Israel equal security and recognized boundaries. Thus, we have the tragedy of 1973 because such negotiations have not taken place. It will continue to be a tragedy there unless both Israel and the Arab states are ready to negotiate a lasting peace.

Some hon. members and some of my colleagues have asked, why is Israel not ready to negotiate without direct negotiation with the Arab states? I say, without using the double-talk of international debate, that you cannot have negotiations unless one of the parties is recognized, unless one of the party's right to exist is recognized. Therefore, a precondition for any negotiations whether direct or indirect, through Mr. Jarring or anyone else, through the United Nations or in any other way, is the acceptance by the Arab states of the existence of Israel and its right to exist in peace and security. Without that recognition, Sir, negotiations are not possible.

I believe that the present tragedy would not be with us, that we would by now have peace in the Middle-East if the big powers were not playing a despicable power game with the hopes and lives of the peoples in that area. At least the United States, Britain and France have made, and are making, efforts to bring peace, to effect peace, to "cool it" in the present situation. But the Soviet Union is doing precisely the opposite. It is not only recklessly rearming the Arab belligerents, forcing Israel to seek armaments from the United States, but it has been directly engaged in encouraging, indeed in bullying, additional Arab states to enter the war, so that Israel is now fighting not merely Egypt and Syria but the armies of six or eight states.

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I would not suggest that Israel has been entirely without fault or that the Israeli government may not have made mistakes. The Israelis are human; they are as capable of error and misdeed as are all other human beings. But of one thing I am convinced: the Israelis desperately need peace, and because they desperately need it, they desperately want it. They are a small population of some three million with little expectation of a substantial increase in their population because the sources of migration of Jews to Israel are now almost completely exhausted. They face enemy neighbours and armed forces many times larger than their entire population. Therefore, Israel wants peace because it needs it desperately.

Like others, I have visited Israel. I have admired the progress which the Israelis have made, the way they have made deserts fertile and have built settlements and communities based on principles of co-operation and social justice. I do not enter into old arguments. The fact is that Israel was established by international action, that it has fought wars to defend its existence and has fully earned, I say to you, Mr. Speaker, universal support for its right to live in peace behind secure and recognized boundaries. On this basic issue there surely cannot be any such thing as a neutral attitude.