" BLUE PRINT FOR PEACE"

Statement on the Near East
by Ambassador Abba Eban
in the Ad Hoc Political Committee
of the United Nations
December 1, 1952.

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1) SECURITY QUESTION: ARMISTICE IS NOT PEACE

The starting point of this discussion is the system of armistice agreements which were concluded between Israel and the Arab states betwee February and August of 1949, and which have governed our relations ever since.

The states of the Near East owe to these Armistice Agreements which were concluded between Israel and the Arab states between February and August of 1949, and which have governed our relations ever since.

The states of the Near East owe to these Armistice Agreements whatever peace and stability they have been able to enjoy in the past four years. The armistice agreements have proved their capacity to solve, with their own framework, all disputes, including some resulting in armed acti which have arisen from time to time. Where such solutions could not be secured in the first instance by the parties themselves, they have been reached by appeal to the Security Council, acting under its duty to deal with situations likely to cause a breach of international peace. In all cases except one, the directives of the Security Council have been succes sfully fulfilled. The one exception relates to the Security Council's injunction of September 1,1951 for the cessation by Egypt of all acts of belligerency and blockade. Here too, of course, my Government retains the right to redress the matter by further appeal to the Security Council should it so decide, or by any other legitimate means.

Now, the armistice agreements, while preferable to whatever precede them and completely irreplaceble except by a peace settlement, do not constitute a satisfactory basis for the relations between Israel and the Arab states in the realm of security. They leave the military forces of both states in close and vigiland scrutiby of the frontiers. They require security provisions of a sternness and caution which would not be necessa if frontier disputes could be settled at a diplimatic level, through the normal civil betwork of controls with the frontier and customs officers both parties working together every day. The unsatisfactory nature of th position is reflected in a great series of incidents involving frequent loss of life, and many dangerous tensions especially on the long and intricate frontier between Israel and territory of the Kingdom of Jordan.

ARMISTICE LEAVES MIDDLE EAST VULNERABLE BEFORE INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT

There are other features of a general armistice position which distinguish it from a normal, peaceful relationship. There is a necessity after our experience of sudden invasion four years ago and in the light of continued infiltrations, to receive more binding guaranties against aggression than those contained in the agreements. I would recall that the armistice agreements were meant to be succeeded after a short time by peace settlements, they are described in their own texts as transitio between armistice and permanent peace. Their maintenance for so long a period puts them under strain. It is therefore appropirate that the

Moreover, while each state [illegible] other, the area of the Middle East as a whole remains vulnerable in the contingency of wider international conflict, and no steps are possible which would enable the region to consult and concert all its action to strengthen peace in the Middle East as a whole, and to contribute to international security.

NON-AGGRESSION CLAUSES AND LIMITATION OF MILITARY BUDGET NEEDED

perek g' It is, therefore, my Government's belief that a peace negotiation 1) should contain four elements under the security heading:

First, the peace settlement should include a non-aggression clause. I wish to emphasize that in our view a non-aggresssion undetaking should be an element of a total peace settlement and not a substitute for it. We have heard assertions that the Arab states on their part allege a fear of Israel expansion. Here I would give assurance that these fears are quite unfounded. Moreover, a country which has a genuine fear of its neighbor's expansion should welcome a peace treaty embodying non-aggression guaranties and treaty obligations recognizing the territorial integrity of each state. It is surely quite inadmissible to assert a fear of aggression and, at the same time, to refuse the exchange of non-aggression guaranties and of measures to implement them within a total peace settlement.

Second, such a settlement would enable a reasonable limitation of military budgets and the avoidance of competitive re-armament. At present we face both the dangers of an arms race and heavy financial burdens at the expense of economic progress and financial stability. If a peace settlement of the kind we are now discussing were achieved, the question of arms supplies to the area could be examined by both parties in direct relation to the defence needs of the region as a whole and with a proper regard for a balance between its security on the one hand and its economic and financial interests on the other.

Third, the transition from armistice to a peace settlement would eliminate the local outbreaks and violence along the frontiers through armed incursions and infiltrations. The peace negotiations should consider practical measures to that end.

Fourth, the settlement here envisaged would enable the states of the Near East to survey methods of regional cooperation for strengthening peace in the area as a whole within the terms of the United Nations Charter.

PEACE WOULD BENEFIT BOTH SIDES

In summarizing the value of these four security provisions under the first item of the proposed peace negotiations, I should like to point out that the advantage accruing from a settlement of these matters would be mutual and would not benefit one side alone. So far as possible we have tried to establish this concept of mutual benefit. Both parties would feel the advantage of a sense of tranquility arising from non-aggression pacts within the framework of a peace settlement. Both parties would benefit from the elimination of factors which draw their governments into arms purchases beyond their capacities, at the expense of their governments into arms purchases beyond their capacities, at the expense of their social, economic and financial recovery and progress. Also, the United Nations would benefit by being relieved of a difficult and expensive responsibility in maintaining a large and cumbersome machinery of armistice supervision. Both parties would benefit from a new framework of relations which would eliminate the tensions, outbreaks and periodic explosions which now take place at the armistics frontier. And finally a cooperative effort to plan the defense of our area would enable all its peoples to contribute more effectively to the [illegible] peace in the Middle East.

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2) TERRITORIAL QUESTIONS: FRONTIERS NEED REAJUSTMENTS

I have already recalled that the armistice treaties have established, by mutual consent of the parties, provisional frontiers within which they have crystallized their national life throughout the past four years. These frontiers can only be changed by a process of negotiation and agreement. The peace negotiation would enable the parties to exchange proposals on the manner in which the armistice frontiers might be mutually adjusted for a peace settlement. One of the problems to be considered would be the elimination of demilitarized zones, where division or obscurity of authority has caused great tensions at critical times. It would also enable adjustments to be made, by suitable exchanges, for ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ reuniting certain villages with their lands and fields in cases where the armistice frontiers now separate them.

This position in favor of adjusting frontiers only by mutual consent has been accepted by the parties in the armistice treaties themselves. I would point out that the tradition of the United Nations has always insisted that frontier adjustment, above all other matters lies in the exclusive responsibility of the governments concerned, provided only that they are sanctioned by their joint agreement and do not rest on unilateral force. Agreed territorial adjustments in development of the armistice treaties would give a sense of stability to all parties and contribute to the pacification of the whole region, and especially the border areas.

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REFUGEE QUESTION: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INITIATORS OF THE WAR

The views of my Government on the refugee question were outlined fully by myself in the discussion of our first agenda item of this Committee. I would state again that this tragic suffering is the legacy of the war against Israel and, therefore, the responsibility of those who initiated that war. However, this consideration in no way affects the profound anxiety and concern with which the Government and people of Israel have observed the maintenance of these unhappy victims in a refugee status without any integration into the lives of communities in which they would feel materially, spiritually and culturally at home.

My Government supported the Resolution which was adopted by the General Assembly earlier this month with reference to the United Nations's Works and Relief Projects. We do not doubt that if that program is carried out with the sincere cooperation of all the governments concerned, a humane and just solution of the refugee problem will be rapidly facilitated. The State of Israel which has exceeded the efforts and sacrifices of any state in history on behalf of refugees coming to it from outside, regards this problem as one of deep and urgent humanitarian concern.

The peace negotiation which I am outling should discuss earnestly the question of international cooperation for the solution of the refugee question. Nothing could be more inspiring than for the two negotiating parties to make joint proposals to the United Nations for international assistance in a solution of this problem which both the Arab states and Israel have defined as international in its scope.

strain on our economy, which is already extended to the utmost degree. The Conciliation Commission invited our agreement to the release of blocked accounts held by Arab refugees in Israel Banks. It is not usual for governments to arrange the flow of foreign currency into countries which are doing everything possible to strangle their economy by boycott, and which even sometimes maintain a claim of the existence of a state of war. However, we did take this unusual step, because we saw the plight of the refugees first, and of the political attitude of the Arab governments second. I renew my expression of appreciation for the words of gratitude which the Palestine Conciliation Commission has expressed in response to this illustration of Israel's Conciliation Commission has expressed in response to this illustration of Israel's goodwill. We were informed that acts of this kind would make a profound impression upon Arab opinion; and we are scrutinizing the records of this debate in an effort to discover whether or not this expectation is fulfilled.

Moreover, at the request of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, my Government agreed this year to take over full responsibility for the integration into Israel of 19,000 refugees. Until recently the same humanitarian consideration guided my Government in facilitating the uniting of families under an agreed program, thus facilitating the passage of thousands of refugees across the lines, notwithstanding the continued existence of a condition far short of peace.

ISRAEL'S RECORD IN REFUGEE RELIEF

The latest Progress Report of the Conciliation Commission describes my Government's cooperation in making available the records on which a study of the compensation question may be pursued. This Committee will recall that, notwithstanding our view that a settlement of the refugee question is an integral part of the establishment of normal relations, as indeed the Conciliation Commission has reported. My Government agreed to the request of the Conciliation Commission to embark on a separate discussion of the compensation question. My Government has accepted the obligation, which it now instructs me to renew, to pay agreed compensation for lands abandoned by Arab refugees and it w ll cooperate with the United Nations organs concerned in working out a plan to that effect in accordance with the statement made by the Foreign Minister of Israel in the Knesset on November 6, 1951. I would draw the attention of the Committee here to the following position: One of the chief factors which affect Israel's capacity of payment is the boycott and blockade imposed by Arab states. Thus, the negotiation of this peace settlement, by removing those abnormal conditions, would have a direct bearing on the degree and rate of progress in payment of compensation. In the meantime, however, we shall continut to cooperate with appropriate United Nations organs in making plans and detailed arrangements for that contingency.

In summarizing this question, I would observe that the refugee problem arose from war and has been perpetuated by the failure to institute relationships, in which it might be solved by cooperative regional effort with international aid. The peace negotiations which I am now outlining would enable representatives of Israel and of Arab states to exchange their views on this subject, in a spirit of sincere concern for the plight of these innocent victims. The benefits which would flow from such a settlement would release the Arab states as well as Israel from the tensions and frustrations which this problem has brought to both.

(per.B') 4. ECONOMIC QUESTIONS: BOYCOTT HURTS MIDDLE EAST AS WHOLE

I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that it is no less important for Israel and the Arab states to restore their economic relationships than it

of a peace settlement allow their minds to range over economic problems, nearly all of which are relevant to all Near Eastern countries, and related to the region as a whole to its political stability as well as to its prosperity.

I should like to suggest here five examples to be considered by the negotiators of the manner in which cooperation between peaceful states could enhance the economic welfare of the Middle East. First, fo course, comes the replacement of the present boycott and blockade by normal economic relations. It is, perhaps, hot sufficiently realized that the benefits of such a step would be felt no less by the Arab than by the Israel economies. Some Arab states, notably Jordan and Lebanon, suffer considerably from the boycott as their own press is beginning eloquently to reveal. Israel, especially with with its recent growth of population and its industrial development, offers a market for Arab products many of which do not find an easy outlet farther from home. I refer especially, in the light of experience, to the perishable agricultural products of Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, the meat of Iraq, the cotton of Egypt. So far I have referred to Israel as a market for exports from Arab countries. But in addition, there is no doubt that our own manufacture could yield a varied range of products to be available to Arab countries from close at hand. The end of the boycott and restoration of trade would thus be a mutual, and not a unilateral benefit.

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INDUSTRIALIZATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RAW MATERIALS POSSIBLE

Secondly, the industrial revolution in Israel is accompanied by similar processes in Arab states. It is clear that Near Eastern countries, especially those with dense populations, can only achieve a reasonable level of prosperity by supplementing their agricultural production by industrial growth. Industrial progress in each country could be facilitated if there were processes of cooperation in the development of markets, in order to assure best results for the area as a whole.

Thirdly, there are projects for exploiting raw materials that could be greatly improved by interstate cooperation. The Dead Sea, a great source of mineral wealth, extends over Israel and Jordan territory. The electrical power scheme in the North was originally envisaged as an interstate project and could again so become. Successful measures which have been taken by Israel to develop its phosphate and other mineral resources in the Central Negec have advantages to offer both as regards geological d data and mining methods, which would be available for similar developments in neighboring countries, into which those mineral resources extend. Such success as Israel has managed to achieve by its own efforts is merely an augury of the far wider benefits which all countries of the area could derive from cooperative efforts in the field of the exploitation of raw materials.

WATER AND AFFORESTATION KEEP TO ECONOMIC DESTINY

Fourthly, the water problem is the key to our region's economic destiny. In its totality the Middle East possesses water resources which would enable a vast increase of population, of power and of industrial and agricultural activity. However, the international frontiers do not correspond with any rational distribution of those water resources. The peace negotiation, in its economic aspect, could give serious consideration to regional irrigation schemes, which are only possible by interstate arrangements and without which no rational utilization of rivers is possible. Israel, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon could all derive great benefits from such cooperation.

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Fifthly, an economic problem common to the whole region is the age-old encroachment of the desert upon the cultivated area. Modern science has taught us not to regard any desert as permanent. Not only can the advance of the desert be stopped, its existing domination can be turned back and reduced by afforestation, by conservation methods, and by irrigation. The necessity to create extensive economic opportunities in a small area has caused Israel to develop its research and activity in this field to a significant degree. There would be great advantage in the exchange of knowledge and cooperation between all governments in the area, which face the problem of turning sandy wastes occupying great stretches of their national territory into flourishing gardens.

POVERTY AND DISEASE COMMON ENEMIES OF ENTIRE REGION

In the last months of his life, President Weizmann reached the conclusion that this perhaps was the most fruitful field in which the resources of science could be applied to the economic progress and, therefore, the political stability of our region. From his initiative, there arose the plan for the Conquest of the Desert Exhibition, which will take place in Jerusalem in the summer of 1953. Many governments, especially those which have had the experience of conquering the desert in the American, European and Asian continents, and in North Africa, will be represented at an interchange of views and experiences, leading, we hope, to practical cooperation. As a prelude to this occasion, and also at Dr. Weizmann's initiative, there was held in May 1952 under the auspices of United Nations' Economic, Social and Cultural Organization a symposium of eminent scientists from all over the the world to consider the problem of cultivating and settling arid zones. Owing to the present state of political relations, this discussion, so relevant to the central problem of improving living standards in the area, was not attended by a single Arab representative. Can anybody make sense out of a system of relationships which prevents us from freely exchanging our efforts and experiences in the battle against poverty and disease, which are the common enemies of our region as a whole?

5. REGIONAL CO-OPERATION: ISRAEL COULD BE BRIDGE RATHER THAN "WEDGE"

I should like to discuss under four headings the manner in which regional cooperation could benefit all countries in the area, beyond the field of direct economic development, which I have just discussed.

(a) COMMUNICATIONS

The absence of normal and peaceful relations between the Arab states and Israel provides no greater anomaly than the absence of any direct communication by land, sea and air amongst the countries of the area. In the dawn of its history, at a time when communications were halting and primitive, the Middle East was an area of active inter-communication which accounted for much of its material and cultural primacy.

The life of our region suffers badly in every sphere through a break in the chain of communication; and the peace negotiation should give urgent thought to ways and means of overcoming to mutual advantage this unnatural heritage of the war. If you imagine railway communications running from Haifa to Beirut, Damascus and Istanbul in the North, to Amman and beyond in the East and traffic resumed on the Haifa-Cairo line, you can see at once how the trade and commerce of the area, as well as its cultural interchange would be strengthened beyond measure. Similarly, resumption and expansion of road communications between Cairo, Jerusalem and Beirut, and between Haifa and Baghdad would stimulate the life and the commerce of the Middle East above any level so far attained.

In the context of a peace settlement ther would be no justification for portraying the southern part of Israel as though it were some kind of a "wedge" between various parts of the Arab World. Our very wedge-like

presenting, Israel would regard itself in this area as a bridge and not ~~xxxxxbridge~~ as a wedge. There are many ways, without prejudice to the territorial severeignty of any state, in which expression could be given to that concept in the sphere of interstate communications.

LIFTING OF BLOCKADE WOULD PROVIDE OUTLETS TO LAND LOCKED NATIONS

It would also be fruitful for the peace negotiation to give thought to problems of maritime communication, including the use of ports, the armistice system requires, and I have no doubt will secure a suspension of active blockade practices. But a peace settlement can carry maritime cooperation into more positive spheres than the mere agreement, to which we are already pledged, to leave each other's shipping alone. As a result of the present boycott policy some Arab states inflict great damage upon themselves by their own exclusion from access to the coast. This is especially true of the Kingdom of Jordan which is completely land-locked as regards the Mediterranean, and is therefore dependent upon intricate and artificially long communications through other ports. In a peace negotiation my Government would again give consideration to the provision of free port facilities at Haifa, thus creating a direct commercial link between the Mediterranean and the hinterland of the Fertile Crescent.

On the Red Sea, in the South, appropirate arrangements of inter-communication could take place between the Israel Port Development at Elath and those ports in the Gulf of Akaba which lie in the territory of Egypt and Jordan.

The freedom of the region from the present blockade would have reassuring effects, on the maritime world in general, and produce lower insurance rates for shipping proceeding to all Middle Eastern ports.

PEACE WOULD RESTORE NORAML RADIO, TELEPHONE AND POSTAL SERVICES

The discussion on communications could also deal with the institution of radio, telephone and postal cables in a continuous network throughout t the countries of the Near East. At this time, the artificial attempt to circumvent Israel imposes, we understand, upon the Arab states long and circuitous routes to the increase of cost, and the reduction of efficiency.

The tourist traffic between Israel, Egypt and Lebanon, which was once a productive source of income for all countries could again be reopened, while the area as a whole with its historic monuments and scenic beauty would attract greater volumes of tourists from outside itself if the present dislocations and difficulties were eliminated in all the spheres of inter-communication.

I would summarize this item by saying that the peace settlement would, in the sphere of cummunications, re-establish the continuity of our area, produce an atmosphere of integration and harmony, and eliminate what is both a cause and an acute symptom of the present regional conflict.

(b) SOCIAL AND HEALTH QUESTIONS

The Committee will be aware that one of the chief handicaps of the Middle East in all its enterprises is its low standard of public health and a lack of progress in social organization. In some of these spheres, there is room for exchange of information and experience, in others we envisage practical cooperation to be worked out in the negotiation to which I refer. Surely, the battle against malaria in Huleh, the Jordan valley and elsewhere, against quaeantine pests and traffic in narcotics are matters of mutual concern in which indeed the absence of regional cooperation is a prejudice to the general human welfare. The medical centers in Israel and in the Arab countries have accumulated a great store of knowledge on those health problems which arise from the special condi-

ISRAEL'S EXAMPLE IN SETTEEMENT AND HOUSING

But the health problem in only one of many which speak in favor of a regional approach to questions of social welfare. One of the acute problems in the Middle East is that of agrarian reform. We have observed with sympathy the recent efforts of the governments of Egypt and Syria to correct this longstanding disability. Israel, on its side, has experimented actively in this field, in the search of new forms of cooperative and smallholder settlements, and in the application of legislative and social restraints against the accumulation of large estates and the creation of an agricultural proletariat without property or leasehold rights.

A new research project now being carried out under the United Nations Technical Assistance for the establishment of suitable rural housing out of a mechanical processing of soil is now in full progress. If successful, it will prove the possibility of providing rural housing without the import of expensive building materials at the cost of foreign currency.

Labor organization is another field in which the countries of the Middle East could with benefit, beginning from the peace negotiation, exchange their experience and create procedures of cooperation. To sum up this item I would say that the development of society in our countries which are all at an early stage of their political growth could profit by the institution of cooperative procedures in health control and social organization.

(c) SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

There have been periods in history when the interaction of the Hebrew and Moslem minds has produced a great flowering of cultural and scientific talent. Anyone who contemplates the common elements in the Hebrew and Arabic cultures will see their profound depth and high elevation; when they achieve their best expressions. The sources of Israel's culture nourished the great streams of Christianity and Islam, whilst keeping its own native source perennially strong. Each culture is now faced by the common problem of adapting its ancient language to the expanding needs of modern affairs.

The interchange by governmental agreement of students and of university personnel would have great effect in reminding both peoples of the common elements in their own traditions, thus removing perhaps more than anything else the unnatural estrangement which has come over our relationship in recent decades. There is no doubt that a reconciliation between Israel and the independent Arab states, would be reflected in wider spiritual fraternity in Jewish-Moslem relations everywhere else in the world.

Research projects such as we have established in the Weizmann Institute of Science and the University of Jerusalem are investigating problems of relevance to the area as a whole. The representatives of Governments should exchange ideas on pooling and co-ordinating research.

(d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COOPERATION

The efforts of the United Nations and all friendly governments to assist our region in many aspects of its life have been frustrated by the charqcter of our political relations. The peace negotiations should rapidly reach agreements releasihg the area from this deprivation. It has been impossible to hold a regional Committee Meeting of the World Health Organization since 1950. The International Labour Office Employment Seminar to be held in Teheran had to be cancelled in November 1951. Where we do not have cancellation, we have expensive and wasteful duplication. Thus such enterprises as the Food and Agricultural Orga-

has actually had to set up an air traffic [illegible] at a high cost, both for maintenance and installation and with impaired efficiency because Beirut refuses to communicate weather reports or give flight information to aircraft bound to and from Israel airports. Are there no human solidarities which prevail over political rancors? Do not the unlimited expanses of sea and air appeal to anything common in our human personality?

Air development could be a great source of wealth for the Middle East with its advantagious position astride three continents. The airlines of very many great aviation countries, of the United States, Great Britain and France, of the Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy and the Scandinavian countries and the Philippines, as well as the Israel National Airline, pass it and out of the airport of Lydda, as they do to Cairo and Beirut by separate and parallel channels. Egyptian and Israel Airlines would have much advantage from normal facilities.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TRANSCENDS BORDERS

Important technical assistance programs are at work in the Near East both under the auspices of the United States and of the United Nations. All the countries in the regions suffer from the absence of technical assistance cooperation in regional water problems, health, organizational problems as well as in meteorology and plant production. Israel would welcome full participation by the neighboring states in the United Nations' Technical Assistance projects now being carried out in Israel, such as the pilot plant for adobe housing, and the F.A.O. Soil Conservation School. We on our part, would welcome participation in the United Nations' Statistical Center at Beirut, and the UNESCO Fundamental Education Center in Cairo.

The considerations which I have outlined apply to similar regional problems, such as locust control. All of these measures could be carried forward with permanent advantage by the establishment so far prevented by Arab reluctance of the United Nations' Regional Economic Commission, which could duplicate and, I hope, even, exceed the successes of similar economic regional commissions which operate for Europe, and Latin America. My Government is prepared to support the establishment of this Commission and to cooperate in its work.

These are merely illustrations of the wide variety of cooperative efforts on which the negotiators could build a strong foundation for re-gional prosperity.