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Q.1. Sir, your statement emphasising willingness to meet the Arab leaders and especially President Nasser, to discuss peace, has aroused widespread interest. You said that you would be on the watch for any possible opportunity of the kind. May I ask you, now, if there is any likelihood of Israel's taking some new initiative for negotiations, instead of merely watching for possible chances?

A. I am glad the statement you mention has aroused widespread interest, because it shows that there is worldwide support for our position. Statesmen and peoples everywhere are becoming more and more aware that there is no alternative to direct negotiations for the settlement of disputes between nations, if the world is to avoid disaster.

I have no doubt at all that sooner or later our Arab neighbours will adjust their policies to this universal feeling.

We have taken the initiative in the past, without publicity, whenever it seemed that there might be some possibility of establishing contact with a view to initiating negotiations.

We shall continue to do the same in the future. We have responded to any initiative that might bring us into contact with Arab leaders.

Our willingness to talk peace is public knowledge. We have been carrying on a monologue about peace for the last 15

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years - and before. I wish it were in our power to

turn it into a dialogue.

Q.2. I know you cannot be precise. But could you perhaps indicate whether Israel would be prepared, if there were negotiations, to offer certain concessions - e.g. where the return of the refugees to this country is concerned?

A. I think it is high time, people realized that it is not the question of concessions that stands in the way of negotiations and peace; it is the refusal of the Arab countries to admit that Israel has a right to exist.

If and when the Arabs agree to negotiations, that very fact will create a new political and psychological atmosphere, in which, I am sure, we should be able to settle the outstanding problems.

Within the framework of negotiations - as we have said again and again - we may see our way to contribute our share to a solution of the problem of the refugees.

Q.3. Would Israel be willing to discuss frontier adjustments as part of a general agreement?

A. I wonder whether your listeners are aware of the real dimensions of the problem. Israel has regained her independence in a tiny patch of 8000 square miles - about the size of Wales. There are now a dozen Arab states, none of them independent before the end of the First World War, occupying territories covering a total of four and a half million square miles.

Is there any sense in countries with such vast spaces at their command, still waiting for development, to begrudge us this small corner which is the basis for our independence?

Of course, if it should be found necessary, in the course of negotiations, to make certain minor and mutual adjustments, we should be willing to discuss problems of that kind.

Q.4. Do you think, Sir, that conditions in the Middle East today are such - or likely to become such - that one can be more hopeful of negotiations between Israel and the Arab States than has been the case in the past?

A. Well, as you say in England, while there's life there's hope. I am an optimist by nature and always expect progress. In fact, the events of the past few weeks, the talks between East and West and other contacts should arouse our hope. I feel that as the years go by, the fact of Israel's existence penetrates the consciousness of the Arab peoples and their leaders, they will realize that they can only benefit by establishing good-neighbourly relations with Israel. In doing that, they will be falling in with the general trend in world affairs, and they will be making an important contribution to their own welfare. They will liberate the countries of the Middle East from fear, suspicion and insecurity and they will help the cause of world peace. Whatever my Government can do to accelerate this process, we will gladly do.

The sooner this takes place, the better it will be for the Arabs, the Middle East, and the world at large.

Friendly Governments could do more than they are doing

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to encourage such reconciliation by making clear their strong
opposition to Arab belligerency and aggression and by
exerting their full influence for direct negotiations.