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QUESTION 1

Mr. Prime Minister, now that the war is over, what is the outlook for peace in the Middle East? Have we seen the last of the wars between Israelis and Arabs?

ANSWER

I certainly hope that this was the last war in the region. You know that this was not a war we wanted. It was forced upon us and our ~~choice~~ choice was either to fight or be annihilated. I have repeatedly called for direct talks with the Arab leaders. I think this is the right time for such discussions, and I hope they will heed the call to meet with us to work out the problems of the region to the benefit of all.

QUESTION 2

What kind of peace settlement do you want? What is the irreducible minimum of conquered territories you will insist on keeping?

ANSWER

Peace will enable all peoples of the region to concentrate their efforts on construction and on raising the standard of living. We think we can iron out many outstanding questions if we get together.

Last week I asked the Knesset, our Parliament, to postpone a debate on our view of possible peace arrangements for a month, because I did not think a public debate would have been useful at this time. No preconditions for the ~~negotiations~~ negotiations are needed. Our objective should be to achieve a settlement.

QUESTION 3

Do you think there is any chance the Arabs will negotiate with you directly?

ANSWER

I am by nature an optimist, and I hope never lose hope that one day this will come about. I hope, for the sake of the region, that this day will be soon.

QUESTION 4

There is talk of a possible confederation of Israel with Jordan or setting up of an independent Arab State of Palestine for some of the conquered areas. What do you think of such proposals? Would either be acceptable to Jordan?

ANSWER

For the reasons outlined above I do not want to discuss any particular plan at this stage. There are various ideas floating about and we have special groups working on this question.

QUESTION 5

Do you think President Nasser or King Hussein will long survive their defeat?

ANSWER

President Nasser has an uncanny ability to survive defeats. He did so in 1956 and apparently may do so this time. But your questions on this should be directed to the Jordanian and the Egyptian peoples. ~~It is for them to decide how long they will choose to follow leaders responsible for the disasters which have befallen them.~~

QUESTION 6

Does Israel intend to keep a military force in Sharm el-Sheikh permanently?

Or would settle for an international force there? What kind?

ANSWER

We insist upon the Straits of Tiran being open at all times for ships of all nations. We have had sad experience of the value of an international force in the Straits recently, and this time we want to insure that there will be no disturbance threatening our ships and ships of other nations proceeding to Ellath (or for that matter to Aquaba). It is too early to say how we shall ensure our rights in this vital area, but we have no intention ~~xxxx~~ of retiring in return for empty assurances.

QUESTION 7

Are you interested in the United Nations playing a part in the settlement? or

in policing the borders and Sharm el-Sheikh?

ANSWER

We have often stated that we think the best way for the Arabs and for us to get together is without third party intervention. This also includes the United Nations. There are some observers who feel that the United Nations has in the past hindered direct talks when they were possible as in the early 1950's. We think that face to face talks are the best way.

QUESTION 8

Some people think Israel attacked Egypt and not the other way around. What actually happened?

ANSWER

Massive concentrations of Egyptian tanks and troops on our borders were poised for attack when Egyptian planes were sighted moving across Israel's and our settlements along the Gaza strip were under heavy shelling frontiers. At that point we had no alternative but to act and act at once. In a very real sense the question is somewhat academic. Nasser and his generals proclaimed their intention to annihilate Israel on many occasions, but the culminating threats came after he had assured himself of Syrian and Jordanian cooperation under Egyptian command. *Egypt also committed an act of war by closing the Straits of Tiran.* We took him, and had to take him, seriously.

QUESTION 9

Did Israel make any mistakes in this war? If so, what?

ANSWER

I think that the results speak for themselves.

QUESTION 10

Did Israel have any "secret weapons" such as a magnetic bomb or rocket that destroyed all those migs on the ground?

ANSWER

We had the morale, the weapons, the training and dedication of our commanders and troops, first class organization of the front and the rear and the conviction that we dare not and could not lose. These were our weapons. There was nothing secret about them, and qualified observers could have told Nasser that

QUESTION 11

What solution would Israel like to see regarding the Palestinian refugees?

Would you accept any as permanent settlers in Israel?

ANSWER

I believe that the problem of the Palestinian refugees can readily be resolved in the context of a general peace settlement with the Arab States. There are many ways in which this can be done, and Israel which has great experience in settling and integrating Jewish refugees from Arab lands, can in the context of a settlement make a decisive contribution.

QUESTION 12

Some Arabs say the United States and Britain supplied air cover and intelligence for Israel in this war. Is this true or not?

ANSWER

This is sheer nonsense without a shred of factual basis. We fought alone. We did not want others fighting for us and as the outcome of the war confirmed, we were fully capable of taking care of ourselves.

QUESTION 13

What support, if any, did the United States give Israel in this war? Are you satisfied with the U.S. position during the war or after?

ANSWER

QUESTION 14

Some people in the U.S. think Israel deliberately attacked the U.S. ship, Liberty, off Egypt. What actually happened there?

ANSWER

The Liberty was attacked as the result of a deplorable series of errors. We learnt of what happened with profound distress and I want again to convey my condolences to the bereaved families. We have apologised to the United States Government. In a war situation there are regrettable accidents, and this was one of them. The Liberty was not deliberately attacked by our forces. There was a problem of identifying the ship which was in the midst of a war zone.

QUESTION 15

Do you think it will be possible to reestablish relations between Israel and Russia? What kind of a role would you like Russia to play in the Middle East?

ANSWER

I hope that the Soviet Union will reestablish the relations which they broke off recently. But I cannot and will not tolerate the vicious and slanderous accusations levelled against Israel in the Soviet Press and by the Soviet representative in the United Nations in which in the same breath they seek to draw parallels between the survivors of the Nazis and the Nazi persecutors themselves. If they really think in these terms, we have nothing to say to them. The Russians can play an important role in the area if instead of supplying the Arabs with arms and prodding them against Israel, they persuade them to come to terms with us.

QUESTION 16

Do you think Russia will resupply Egypt and Syria with all the military equipment they lost?

ANSWER

I sincerely hope they will not. Twice within a decade we have witnessed the fate of these weapons. They have not contributed to peace and stability in the Middle East. But I am sorry to see that the Russians are already resuming the sending of war planes to Egypt. This is <sup>only</sup> likely to make the Arab stand more adamant and negative as far as talks are concerned.

QUESTION 17

What is Israel going to do with all the equipment it won from the Arabs?

ANSWER

Some of it has already been absorbed by our forces in the course of battle. The Centurion tanks which we captured intact are already in our service together with hundreds of vehicles and other types of weapons. We are examining the other material before we decide what to do with it.

QUESTION 18

If Egypt builds nuclear weapons or goes on with development of missiles, will Israel do the same?

ANSWER

I want to repeat what I have often said about this question. We will not be the first country to introduce into the region nuclear weapons. I call your attention to the rockets and the gas containers we found in the Sinai. This means that the Egyptians were intending to use these unconventional weapons against us. Why they failed to do so I leave to your military experts to determine.

QUESTION 19

Do you think the Arabs will become friendly with the United States again?

ANSWER

We do not begrudge friendly relations between the Arabs and any country, as long as these ties are not at Israel's expense. Thus we certainly have no objection to the Arabs having good relations with the United States, Britain, France, West Germany or any one. On the contrary, it may be useful in the future.

Question 20

What countries do you think will be Israel's chief allies in the future?

ANSWER

I am convinced that Israel has many friends in time of need. We have no allies and never had any allies. We do not belong to any military or defensive pact. We have always been alone, but we have many friends who understand and value what we are trying to do and our hopes and aims.

QUESTION 21 - What kind of a future do you see for Israel and the Middle East?

ANSWER

If and when peace comes, and now is the right time to advance towards it with full steam, there is a great future for this area. With the combined efforts and resources and knowhow accumulated in the Middle East by all the nations here, tremendous things can be accomplished on a regional scale that can really turn the desert into a garden. We can work together on water development, on trade and on common industrial projects, on tourism and agriculture, in the spheres of health



and education. There is no end to what can be done if we go at it together with everything that all of us have got. I think there has never been a more appropriate time than now to proceed and talk peace and development and progress.