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INTERVIEW OF THE PRIME MINISTER BY MR WOLF MANKOWITZ

QUESTION

How can lasting peace be achieved? Would Israel not be prepared to consider third-party mediation?

ANSWER

To begin with, it should by now be clear even to the most casual observer of the Middle East that the so-called armistice regime that existed in this area from 1949 to 1967 and that was supposed to serve as a bridge to peace did not fulfil its function. On the contrary, the neighbouring States used it as a bridge to war.

The experience of these two decades has also shown that third-party mediation can be of little help. If the Arabs are ready for peace, there is no reason in the world why they should not agree to talk with us about it. If, on the other hand, their wish is to continue their past policy of non-recognition and belligerence, third-party mediation would accomplish no purpose except to act as a screen behind which this policy could be perpetuated. Obviously, this is not the road to lasting peace.

There is only one way to peace, and that is through mutual recognition and frank talks conducted directly between the parties and aiming at a constructive, mutually beneficial solution of all our problems.

Only last week I reiterated my readiness to meet the leader of any of the Arab States, at any time and at any place, to discuss a peace settlement between our peoples.

QUESTION 2

What is Israel prepared to do now for the Arab refugees?

ANSWER

Once negotiations are set in motion for a peaceful settlement of Israel-Arab differences, there is no problem that need long remain unsolved. We are prepared to open talks with our Arab neighbours now and, within the framework of such talks, to do our share in achieving a just and truly humane solution of the refugee problem. I am sure that if the Arab States, for their part, will respond in the same spirit, we will be able together - and with the help of the international community - to bring about the integration of the refugees in the normal life of ~~the area~~ <sup>our region</sup>.

QUESTION 3

How can links between Israel and the Diaspora be made even stronger? How can Israel attract more young Jews?

ANSWER

I would like to say, at the outset, that it has been a rousing and truly heart-warming experience for us in Israel to witness the magnificent response, among all sectors of world Jewry, to the crisis through which we have just passed. This response is proof, if proof were needed, that the link between the Jewish communities the world over and Israel is as strong as ever and that, in time of peril, we do not stand alone.



Now that the immediate danger is past, and we seek to build our future, we face the urgent task of channelling the tremendous enthusiasm that has been evinced by our brethren abroad into the many constructive tasks and challenges that now confront us. The State of Israel can pave the way for such a movement by doing two things: (1) by ~~launching a re-examination and renewal~~ <sup>revising and extending</sup> of our people's moral and cultural values and applying these, actively and constructively, in the general reorganizing and rebuilding process that must now be set in motion; (2) by vigorously resuming our efforts towards the economic development of our country and the drive for eventual economic independence. This means further <sup>modern</sup> industrialization and increased exports; it means continuing the conquest of our barren areas - <sup>and in the Galilee</sup> particularly in the Negev; it means pushing ahead, full speed, with such vitally important projects as the seawater-desalination plant.

This twin challenge - revival, in this historic hour, of Israel's spiritual heritage, and the concerted push towards the goal of economic self-sufficiency and a better life for all - should stir the imagination particularly of the young men and women in our Jewish communities abroad and offer them an aim, a challenge and a mission that could transform their lives, and help transform the lives of many - here in Israel and, eventually, throughout this peace-starved region.

Hereby increasing <sup>our</sup> ~~the~~ population and establishing here an ever ~~is~~ bigger center for the Jewish nation to develop its ~~inherent~~ <sup>inherent</sup> capabilities, its natural genius, and its historical heritage and moral values.