

# EBAN'S ANSWER TO RUSSIANS AT U.N.

(Continued from Page 2)

dead or wounded than I join my voice in an expression of the most sincere regret.

## FUTURE U.N. ROLE PROBLEMATIC

The problem of the future role of a United Nations presence in conflicts such as these is much debated. We must ask ourselves a question that has arisen as a result of this experience. People in our country and in many countries ask: What is the use of a United Nations presence if it is in effect, an umbrella which is taken away as soon as it begins to rain?

Surely, the future arrangements for peace-keeping must depend more on the agreement and implementation by the parties themselves than on machinery which is totally at the mercy of the host country, so totally at its mercy as to be the instrument of its policies, whatever those policies may be.

We have lived through three dramatic weeks. Those weeks have brought into clear view the main elements of tension, and also the chief promise of relaxed tension in the future. The first link in the chain was the series of sabotage acts emanating from Syria. In October last year, the Security Council was already seized of this problem. A majority of its member States found it possible and necessary to draw attention to the Syrian Government's responsibility for altering that situation. Scarcely a day passed without a mine, a bomb, a hand-grenade or a mortar exploding on Israel's soil, sometimes with lethal or crippling effects; always with an unsettling psychological influence. In general, fourteen or fifteen such incidents would accumulate before a response was considered necessary. And this ceaseless accumulation of terrorist incidents in the name of what was called "popular war", together with responses which in the long run sometimes became inevitable, were for a long period the main focus of tension in the Middle East.

But then there came a graver source of tension in mid-May, when abnormal troop concentrations were observed in the Sinai Peninsula. For the ten years of relative stability beginning with March 1957 and ending with May 1967, the Sinai Desert had been free of Egyptian troops. In other words, a natural geographic barrier, a largely uninhabited space, separated the main forces of the two sides. It is true that in terms of sovereignty and law, any state has a right to put its armies in any part of its territory that it chooses. This, however, is not a legal question; it is a political and a security question. Experience in many parts of the world, not least in our own, demonstrates that massive armies in close proximity to each other, against a background of a doctrine of belligerency and accompanying threats by one army to annihilate the other, create an inflammatory situation.

We were puzzled in Israel by the relative lack of pre-occupation on the part of friendly Governments and international agencies with this intense concentration which found its reflection in precautionary concentrations on our side. My Government proposed, at least two weeks ago, the concept of a parallel and reciprocal reduction of forces on both sides of the frontier. We elicited no response, and certainly no action.

## INTERNATIONAL WATERWAY CLOSED

To these grave sources of tension -- the sabotage and terrorist movement, emanating mostly from Syria, and the heavy troop concentrations accompanied by dire, apocalyptic threats in Sinai -- there was added in the third week of May the most electric shock of all. This was the closure of the international waterway consisting of the Strait of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba. It is not difficult to understand why this incident had a more drastic impact than others. In 1957 the maritime nations, within the framework of the United Nations General Assembly, correctly enunciated the doctrine of free and innocent passage through the Strait. Now, when that doctrine was proclaimed -- and incidentally, not challenged by the Egyptian representative at that time -- it was little more than an abstract principle for the maritime world. For Israel it was a great but still unfulfilled prospect. It was not yet a reality. But during the ten years in which we and the other States of the maritime community have relied upon that doctrine and upon established usage, the principle has become a reality, consecrated by hundreds of sailings under dozens of flags and the establishment of a whole complex of commerce and industry and communication. A new dimension has been added to the map of the world's communications. On that dimension we have constructed Israel's bridge toward the friendly States of Asia and Africa, a network of relationships which is the chief pride of Israel in the second decade of its independence.

All this, then, had grown up as an effective usage under the United Nations flag. Does Mr. Nasser really think that he can come upon the scene in ten minutes and cancel the established legal usage and interests of ten years?

There was in this wanton act a quality of malice. For surely the closing of the Strait of Tiran gave no benefit whatever to Egypt except the perverse joy of inflicting injury on others. It was an anarchic act, because it showed a total disregard for the law of nations, the application of which in this specific case had not been challenged

for ten years. And it was an act of arrogance, because there are other nations in Asia and East Africa that trade with the Port of Elath, as they have every right to do, through the Strait of Tiran and across the Gulf of Aqaba. Other sovereign States from Japan to Ethiopia, from Thailand to Uganda, from Cambodia to Madagascar, have a sovereign right to decide for themselves whether they wish or do not wish to trade with Israel. These countries are not colonies of Cairo. They can trade with Israel or not trade with Israel as they wish, and President Nasser is not the policeman of other African and Asian States.

Here then was a wanton intervention in the sovereign rights of other States in the eastern half of the world to decide for themselves whether or not they wish to establish trade relations with either or both of the two ports at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba.

## A BLOCKADE IS AN ACT OF WAR

When we examine the implications of this act, we have no cause to wonder that the international shock was great. There was another reason too for that shock. Blockades have traditionally been regarded, in the pre-Charter parlance, as acts of war. To blockade, after all, is to attempt strangulation -- and sovereign States are entitled not to have their trade strangled. To understand how the State of Israel felt, one has merely to look around this table and imagine, for example, a foreign Power forcibly closing New York or Montreal, Boston or Marseilles, Toulon or Copenhagen, Rio or Tokyo or Bombay harbour. How would your Governments react? What would you do? How long would you wait?

But Israel waited because of its confidence that the other maritime Powers and countries interested in this new trading pattern would concert their influence in order to re-establish a legal situation and to liquidate this blockade. We concerted action with them not because Israel's national interest was here abdicated. There will not be -- there cannot be -- an Israel without Elath. We cannot be expected to return to a dwarfed stature, with our face to the Mediterranean alone. In law and in history, peace and blockades have never coexisted. How could it be expected that the blockade of Elath and a relaxation of tension in the Middle East could ever be brought into harmony?

## THREE MAIN ELEMENTS OF TENSION

These then were the three main elements in the tension: the sabotage movement; the blockade of the port; and, perhaps more imminent than anything else, this vast and purposeful encirclement movement, against the background of an authorized presidential statement announcing that the objective of the encirclement was to bring about the destruction and the annihilation of a sovereign State.

These acts taken together -- the blockade, the dismissal of the United Nations force, and the heavy concentration in Sinai -- effectively disrupted the STATUS QUO which had ensured a relative stability on the Egyptian-Israeli frontier for ten years. I do not use the words "relative stability" lightly, for while those elements of the Egyptian-Israeli relationship existed there was not one single incident of violence between Egypt and Israel for ten years. But suddenly this pattern of mutually accepted stability was smashed to smithereens. It is now the task of the Governments concerned to elaborate the new conditions of their coexistence. I think that much of this work should be done directly by these Governments themselves. Surely, after what has happened we must have better assurance than before, for Israel and the Middle East of peaceful coexistence. The question is whether there is any reason to believe that such a new era may yet come to pass. If I am sanguine on this point, it is because of a conviction that men and nations do behave wisely once they have exhausted all other alternatives. Surely the other alternatives of war and belligerency have now been exhausted. And what has anybody gained from them? But in order that the new system of interstate relationships may flourish in the Middle East, it is important that certain principles be applied above and beyond the cease-fire to which the Security Council has given its unanimous support.

## ISRAEL WELCOMES APPEAL FOR CEASE-FIRE

Let me then say here that Israel welcomes the appeal for the cease-fire as formulated in this resolution. But I must point out that the implementation depends on the absolute and sincere acceptance and co-operation of the other parties, which, in our view, are responsible for the present situation. And in conveying this resolution to my colleagues, I must at this moment point out that these other Governments have not used the opportunity yet to clarify their intentions.

I have said that the situation to be constructed after the cease-fire must depend on certain principles. The first of these principles surely must be the acceptance of Israel's Statehood and the total elimination of the fiction of its non-existence. It would seem to me that after 3,000 years the time has arrived to accept Israel's nationhood as a fact. Here is the only State in the international community which has the same territory, speaks the same language and upholds the same faith as it did 3,000 years ago.

And if, as everybody knows to be the fact, the universal conscience was in the last week or two most violently

shaken at the prospect of danger to Israel, it was not only because there seemed to be a danger to a State. It was also, because the State was Israel, with all that this ancient name evokes, teaches, symbolizes and inspires. How grotesque would be an international community which found room for 127 sovereign units and which did not acknowledge the sovereignty of that people which had given nationhood its deepest significance and its most enduring grace.

## ISRAEL'S SUCCESSFUL RESISTANCE EVOKES ITSELF

No wonder, then, that when danger threatened we could hear a roar of indignation sweep across the world. No wonder that men in progressive movements and members of the scientific and humanistic cultures joined together in sounding an alarm bell about an issue that vitally affected the human conscience. And no wonder that a deep and universal sense of satisfaction and relief has accompanied the news of Israel's gallant and successful resistance.

But the central point remains the need to secure an authentic recognition by our neighbors of Israel's deep roots in the Middle Eastern reality. There is an intellectual tragedy in the failure of Arab leaders to come to grips however reluctantly, with the depth and authenticity of Israel's roots in the life, the history, the spiritual experience and the culture of the Middle East.

This, then, is the first axiom. A much more conscious and uninhibited acceptance of Israel's Statehood is an axiom requiring no demonstration. There will never be a Middle East without an independent and sovereign State of Israel in its midst.

The second principle must be that of the peaceful settlement of disputes. The resolution now adopted falls within the concept of the peaceful settlement of disputes. I have already said that much could be done if the Governments of the area would embark much more on direct contacts. They must find their way to each other. After all, when there is conflict between them they come together face to face. Why should they not come together face to face and solve the conflict? On some occasions it would not be a bad idea to have the solution before, and therefore instead of, the conflict.

## NOT BACKWARD TO BELLIGERENCY BUT FORWARD TO PEACE

When the Council discusses what is to happen after the cease-fire, we hear many formulae; back to 1956, back to 1948 -- I understand our neighbours would wish to turn the clock back to 1947. The fact is, however, that most clocks move forward and not backward. This should be the case with the clock of Middle Eastern peace. Not backward to belligerency, but forward to peace.

The point was well made this evening by the representative of Argentina, who said: "The cease-fire must be followed immediately by the most energetic efforts to find a just and true peace in the Middle East." In a similar sense, the representative of Canada warned us against merely reproducing the old positions of conflict, without attempting to settle the underlying issues of Arab-Israeli coexistence. After all, many things in recent days have been mixed up with each other. Few things are what they were. And in order to create harmonious combinations of relationships, it is inevitable that the States should come together in negotiation.

Another factor in the harmony that we would like to see in the Middle East relates to external Powers. From these, and especially from the greatest amongst them, the small States of the Middle East -- and most of them are small -- ask for a rigorous support, not for individual States, but for specific principles; not to be for one State against other States, but to be for peace against war, for free commerce against belligerency, for the peaceful settlement of disputes against violent irredentist threats; in other words, to exercise an even-handed support for the integrity and independence of States and for the rights of States under the Charter of the United Nations and other sources of international law.

There are no two categories of States. The United Arab Republic, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon -- not one of these has a single ounce or milligram of Statehood which does not adhere in equal measures to Israel itself.

## BALANCED ATTITUDE REQUIRED FROM OTHER STATES

It is important that States outside our region apply a balanced attitude. They should not exploit temporary tensions and divergencies in the issues of global conflict. They should not seek to win gains by inflaming fleeting passions and they should strive to make a balanced distribution of their friendship amongst the States of the Middle East.

Now whether all the speeches of all the great Powers this evening meet this criterion, everybody, of course, can judge for himself. I do not propose to answer in detail all the observations of the representative of the Soviet Union. I had the advantage of hearing the same things in identical language a few days ago from his colleague, the Soviet Ambassador in Israel. I must confess that I was no more convinced this evening than I was the day before yesterday about the validity of this most vehement and one-sided denunciation. But surely world opinion, before whose

(Continued on Page 4)