

# Stable Peace Means Readiness for War

By Dr. Yitschak Ben Gad

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Yitschak Ben Gad (Macluf) of Natanya, Israel, JEWISH ESPONENT Mideast Analyst, will be on a speaking tour of the United States from March 31 to May 7, 1978. Groups and organizations may inquire about available bookings by calling Lillian Cohen at (201) 536-9165).

Sadat's political initiative may prove dangerous to Israel if it decreases the readiness and determination of the Israelis to fight again, if necessary.

The Israeli nation always wanted peace and hated war. The death of the thousands of Israelis in various wars, was very bitter, yet the nation carried the pain quietly and bravely. From the human and moral point of view, these are healthy characteristics. The Israeli people's desire for peace is necessary also to reduce the Arabs' fear of what they call Israeli "aggression and expansionist intentions." While in Cairo, I heard from the Egyptian hosts that Sadat and his entourage were impressed by the Israeli people's spontaneous and honest

desire for peace. On the other hand, we are not allowed to forget that over-desire for peace and subsequent lack of readiness to fight, coupled with over-demonstration of our hatred for wars and over-concern for crisis in the political negotiations, may not only not bring peace, but might ultimately cause bitter wars.

What are the other reasons behind this introduction?

A) Concern and even fear of a new war with Israel, played an important role in Sadat's decision to begin his political initiative. Therefore, Israel should convince Sadat to make progress towards peace by expressing her clear position: On the one hand, Sadat must be convinced that by obtaining peace with Israel and honoring the peace treaty, he is not taking any risk of Israeli aggression in the future. On the contrary, Israel is promising full tranquility and full cooperation to decrease the chances of a confrontation. On the other hand, it must be clear to Sadat, that if he refuses to compromise with Israel or if he intends to mislead Israel in one way or another, then he will find the Israeli people and government prepared to fight to prove that violation of the peace treaty does not pay.

If the Egyptians come to the conclusion that Israelis are frightened or exhausted of war and as a result are not prepared for it, they may assume that they can obtain more concessions from Israel by mere threats of war and artificial political crisis. Such a situation may deteriorate into a new military confrontation.

In light of all this, the image of Israel's preparedness for war, if necessary, coupled with her deep desire for peace, are the main elements for success of the political negotiations and to maintain stability once a peace treaty is achieved, if at all.

B) We must take into consideration that Egypt is not the only Arab country which is in conflict with Israel. It is possible that dur-

ing the Egyptian - Israeli negotiations or after an agreement is achieved, the Syrians, once again, may begin their threats of war against Israel. Here too, Israel's over-desire for peace and over-hatred for war, may encourage the Syrians to believe that Israel is weak and thereby, be the cause of a new Syrian - Israeli war. About the same can be said with regards to other Arab states.

C) The Israeli people's over-desire for peace may exert strong pressure and limit the power of political maneuverability of the Israeli government to achieve a real and permanent peace. For example, Israeli public pressure may push Begin's government to agree to Arab conditions, which may be dangerous to Israel's very existence in the future.

While in Egypt, I heard more than once from our Egyptian counterparts that the Israeli government, with her "intransigent policy," does not speak on behalf of the Israeli people. Quite often, articles and editorials appeared in the Egyptian media, which were meant to appeal directly to the Israeli people and to by-pass Begin's government. In one of his recent speeches, Sadat blamed Begin's administration for intransigence while at the same time, praised the Israeli people for loving and wanting peace.

D) Let us hope that our dreams will come true and Israel would reach political agreements not only with Egypt, but with the other Arab states as well. However, such expectations are just that - expectations and Israel should always be prepared for the unexpected. Let's not forget that 30 years of hatred and hostility cannot be erased overnight. This is in spite of the friendship shown by the Egyptian people to Israeli guests in Egypt. Instability in the Arab states remains a fact, and the hatred towards Israel among the Arabs, especially the "rejectionists" such as Libya, Iraq, Syria, etc., still exists.

In other words, the danger of war still exists, even though a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt may decrease the chances of such a war.

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