

September 1967

STATEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

In 19 years, while struggling to protect itself from physical destruction, Israel has become not only a haven for the survivors of the Hitler holocaust, but a center of intellectual dynamism and one of the world's great sources of scientific research.

Enabled to develop in peace, Israel's contribution to the region and to the world may rival in fruitfulness and enduring quality that of the ancient state in the days of the Bible.

To preserve and encourage so great a human and creative source is surely a major responsibility of the civilized world.

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Israel has given an extraordinary account of its capacity to defend itself against aggressors on the battlefield. By its own valor, it has surmounted a climactic, unified design to destroy it. Thus it has forestalled the dangers of a military confrontation between the major powers.

Alone among the major powers, the United States has evinced realistic initiative to seize the opportunity thus created for a settlement which could lead to ultimate reconciliation, the stabilization of the area and its development for the benefit of its peoples.

The undersigned support that initiative and the salients of United States policy as set forth in the five principles proposed by the President on June 19, 1967. We urge that this policy be fortified and pursued inside the United Nations and outside it with all the authority of our strength as a nation.

We firmly believe, as stated by our Government, that:

1. In fact, as in principle, there can be no return to the status quo ante, in the interests of peace and security;
2. The United States should continue to uphold the rights of Israel, as a sovereign State, directly to seek and negotiate a settlement with each of the warring States;
3. Every effort should be made by the United States to induce the warring States to enter into such negotiations.

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Direct negotiations provide no privilege to either side; they are common practice among sovereign States.

In the delimited atmosphere of a direct confrontation between the parties, insulated against the competitions and pressures of major or minor States, hard reality may prove more effective counsel and impetus for a settlement than the public debates of the past 20 years.

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The central issue is security and peace. Israel's security is bound up with our own. Without peace settlements entered into by Israel and each of the warring States, we are only storing up fuel for new outbreaks, with no assurance that a new encounter can be contained or restricted either to conventional weapons or to regional States.

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Once peace settlements have been reached, it becomes possible to tackle the formidable human and development problems of the region which have resisted solution until now.

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