

Text of Statement Commenting on Favorable
Israeli Cabinet Vote on United States
Peace Initiative

As you know, on June 25 we announced that the United States was undertaking a major political initiative. Our objective was to encourage the parties to the conflict to stop shooting and start talking under the auspices of United Nations Ambassador Jarring in accordance with the pertinent resolutions of the Security Council.

The Israeli Government is now in the process of drafting its detailed reply to the United States. However, I am pleased to say that we have been informed by the Government of Israel of the Cabinet vote to accept the United States proposal. I am gratified that now all three governments to whom we have addressed our initiative have responded positively and accepted the United States proposal.

We do not underestimate the difficulties which still lie ahead. The acceptance of the U. S. proposal by the governments principally concerned -- important as it is -- is only a first step. It will require moderation, flexibility, and a willingness by both sides to accept something less than their maximum positions if progress toward a just and lasting peace between the parties is to be made. But the ceasefire and negotiations that now seem within reach are an essential beginning.

In this connection let me reiterate one point. It is an integral part of our ceasefire proposal that neither side is to use the ceasefire period to improve its military position in the area of the ceasefire lines. All would have to refrain from emplacing new missile or other installations and from undertaking a military buildup of any kind in such an area.

For our part, we have been engaged since early 1969 in cooperative efforts with the governments of the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France to help move the Middle East conflict toward a peaceful settlement. We expect these efforts to continue. We firmly believe, however, that the focus of future efforts must be on the parties directly concerned under the aegis of Ambassador Jarring. We wish Ambassador Jarring and the parties well in their efforts and stand ready to help wherever and whenever we can.

1. 4. 70 of the day (U.S.)
It is time for quiet diplomacy
to take over.