

## **Cabinet communique on the visit of Secretary of State Vance, 13 February 1977.**

*One of the first moves of the newly inaugurated Carter administration, was to ask the Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, to undertake a visit to the Middle East to meet its leaders and study their views on how to proceed with the peace making process. Israel's views on his forthcoming visit, as well as details regarding the visit of UN Secretary General Waldheim, are contained in the following excerpt from the cabinet communique. Israel's negotiating stance is clearly indicated. The Foreign Minister reported on the talks with U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim. It had been made clear to Dr. Waldheim, that according to Israel's approach, the Geneva Peace Conference was not a one-time event but a continuous process, even if intervals occurred therein from time to time. The Geneva Conference is a framework for negotiation and dialogue, Minister Allon made it clear that it was not imperative that all meetings be held precisely in Geneva. He stressed that Security Council Resolution 338 was the sole basis for the Geneva Conference, as the U.N. Secretary-General himself had stated at the opening of the Geneva Peace Conference in December 1973.*

The Foreign Minister emphasized the fact that all the agreements concluded since the Yom Kippur War between Israel and Egypt, and Israel and Syria, were a function of the Geneva Conference. Resolution 338 is explicitly mentioned in these agreements, with reference to future negotiations as well.

Dr. Waldheim was made clearly aware by Israel of its consent to the immediate convening of the Geneva Conference in line with the original pattern, as regards both composition of the participants and procedure. If there was any hindrance whatsoever to the conference's convening, it did not stem from Israel's stand - being rather the result of the ultimative demands of the factors who were attempting to effect a change in the conference's composition and essence and were presenting prior conditions. Israel informed the U.N. Secretary-General that it objected to a United Arab delegation, as well as to the PLO's participation in the conference in any manner whatsoever. At the same time, the U.N. Secretary-General was informed that the government of Israel consents to inclusion of Palestinian representatives from the West Bank in Jordan's delegation to the conference.

Referring to the visit to Jerusalem of the new American Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, the Foreign Minister stated that Israel would welcome the visitor with the amicability and respect he merited. The meetings would be devoted principally to mutual acquaintance and to presentation of Israel's positions on the central political issues on the agenda, which are anchored in the government's resolutions. Israel attaches priority to an overall peace agreement and to full normalization of relations with its neighbours. As a second priority, Israel is agreeable - in accordance with the United States' proposal - to examination of the possibility of conducting negotiations with its neighbours on ending the state of war.

Referring to the Palestinian issue, the Foreign Minister emphasized that Israel would submit to the visitor its plan for a constructive solution of this question in the context of peace with Jordan - which occupied two thirds of the land of Israel. Israel would look with favour on the participation of Palestinian representatives from the West Bank in Jordan's delegation to the Geneva, Conference. Recalling the Palestinian Covenant that called for Israel's liquidation, the Foreign Minister reiterated and stressed that the PLO does not come into account for the Palestinians' representation.

The Foreign Minister remarked that the fact that Mr. Vance had chosen the Middle East as the first region to visit, and in proximity to his assumption of office, testified to the importance the new U.S. administration attached to promotion of peace in the region. The Foreign Minister stressed that the Secretary of State would find Israel ready for negotiations without prior conditions with every one of the Arab states on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 - with a sincere aim of attaining durable peace - once the requisite preparations for maximal assurance of success of the effort are concluded.