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"The Peace Initiatives and the Status of the Campaign." February
1971.

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"The Peace Initiatives and
The Status of the Campaign"

by Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman
Executive Chairman,
United Jewish Appeal

During the past few weeks, people have been saying at various meetings, and in various discussions which I have been having around the country, that they have a feeling that the sense of urgency has gone out of the campaign. There was a great feeling of urgency some months ago when we started this enormous campaign. But now, I am told, something seems to have gone out of it, it somehow doesn't seem so necessary.

This general feeling has become compounded in the past two weeks or so, as Egypt has - suddenly and unexpectedly - made some peace moves. This further compounds the question and causes people to say, "Well, if we're on the road to peace, why are such enormous sums of money required? Why is such a large campaign necessary?" I would like, very quietly, to try to answer this, because the answer to these questions will determine whether the campaign, at this point, will continue at the high level at which it started, or whether it will sag. The latter possibility would be a tragedy, in view of the studies which we have already made at the beginning of this campaign.

Let me state as simply as I know how, that no sense of urgency has disappeared. Let me state further, that nothing has occurred in the past two or three weeks with these Egyptian peace moves which in any way alters the premise upon which the campaign was based. Why was a campaign of this size projected in the first place? Let me remind you: in order to provide Israel with security and, thus, survival - while, at

the same time, permitting her to continue the influx of immigrants, on a very high level, whose desire to find a home in that Israel made the war worth fighting in the first place.

The security of the country and the taking in of people to that country required, in 1971, an enormous amount of money. The military bill was going to be over \$1,500,000,000, of which only five hundred million (\$500,000,000) came in the form of outside help in the form of loans voted by the U.S. Congress. The bill for human needs - immigration, absorption and our other traditional responsibilities - was going to be over \$600,000,000. These two bills continue, whether new peace moves are made or not. That's the crux of the matter.

This sudden flurry of diplomatic activity in the last couple of weeks, in which Sadat has used the word "agreement", gives a false impression to some unsophisticated people: that suddenly, peace is about to break out. Peace isn't about to break out! Let's understand this exactly, and not delude ourselves with any foolish optimism. Israel is only now about to face the "crunch", the real crunch - which we define as being the most delicate, difficult situation at a given moment.

Up to now, it was war, the threat of war, cease-fire, and then renewed war. Since the enemy preferred war, no one had to think about a definition of peace; no one had to think of what that meant. All Israel had to do was keep her head low, try to minimize her casualties, and try to maximize the damage she did to the enemy. Now, this change has taken place: Sadat has used the word "agreement." There is no doubt that this is a departure from the old Khartoum formula of no peace, no recognition, no negotiations. But, how much of a departure, we don't know!

He still hasn't used the key words, such as "peace treaty", or "recognition of Israel". He still hasn't removed that sword hanging over our heads on March 7th, when the cease-fire expires in only a few short days. He still hasn't changed his call for total withdrawal. So, there has been a change, but we don't know how much of a change.

Therefore, there are two possibilities, as always in these matters: One is that this path of negotiations will continue; the other is a path of renewed hostilities. There is no doubt in my mind that the future could go either way. But let's take the assumption that we go on the path of negotiations toward peace, because that's why people think we may not need so much money anymore. Even if the negotiations continue, even if the March 7th deadline is removed, (let's say by postponement for another 30 days - I don't think it would be longer than that), they are going to continue to try to use negotiations by ultimatum and to set deadlines, and "agreement" is still a long, long way off.

The most crucial fact of all, is whether Israel will be able to hold out for another long and heavy pressure period. If she shows any weakness, either military or economic, then you can be sure that Egypt will put the pressure on again - political and military - to crack Israel and force her into total withdrawal.

You see, we now enter the phase where the problem is territorial: Should Israel submit to the Egyptian request for total withdrawal back behind the El Arish Line? Shimon Peres, said just a few days ago in a cabinet discussion, "We musn't lose our cool. We musn't allow ourselves to be pressured into any decisions that we may regret in future years. We are strong enough to hold out so that the Egyptians will remain on this path of negotiation, and not be tempted back to the path of war."

Now they're demanding total withdrawal. And again, we must be able to hold out long enough, and, yes, stubbornly enough, so that they will finally see that this demand, also, will not be met. And again they'll give in, and they'll modify their demand, and they'll put it in a form to which we will be able to accede, and that's how the negotiations will go forward another step.

Israel might withdraw at some agreed-upon point if they, in turn, would settle one issue after another. There are a dozen such issues which have to be settled: navigation, refugees, Tiran, demilitarized zones - God knows what has to be settled. In other words, they say total withdrawal in return for nothing - and Israel says NO! But partial and gradual withdrawal, accompanied by the settlement of one issue after another issue after another issue - to this Israel would say YES. This process will take time, will require enormous willpower, strength, and courage. We must hold out until we can trade withdrawal for peace. That's the long and short of it.

Now, the other path to which I referred is the path of possible renewed hostilities. Since this is very real, Israel is not reducing her purchases of equipment in the United States. Let's understand that. Furthermore, the United States is not pressuring Israel in any way to make a political settlement, or threatening that arms will not be sold. There is no such pressure or threat of pressure from America. Therefore, it would be foolhardy, even suicidal, if, in the face of this possibility of peace negotiation, Israel were to be fooled and say suddenly, "Well, we are really on the road to peace, so therefore, we can save some money, and we don't have to buy so much equipment." That would be suicidal.

So, you see, the enormous spending continues, even if the Jarring talks continue. There is no relationship between the two. And that's what everyone must understand very, very carefully. Even if the so-called talks about peace continue, the financial facts of 1971 are exactly as we described them to you months and months ago. Let me try to put it another way: If Israel's ability to defend herself in case of war requires large expenditures, then Israel's ability to obtain peace may require even larger expenditures, because it will take longer to go through this step-by-step process which I described. No, peace is certainly not breaking out at any moment.

Meanwhile, we hopefully await each development, and the next move will be to see if the March 7th deadline is removed. As we face a long period of hard negotiating, we must understand that the greatest danger--of coming under the gun once again--will be the result of any weakness on our part. The greatest guarantee of finally arriving at peace will be our ability to hold out long enough and to negotiate hard enough.

Now, let us speak frankly. The ability to hold out depends upon the morale of the people of Israel and the condition of their pocketbook. Their morale and the condition of the pocketbook depend upon how we react: if we flag in our support, they will flag; if we hold up a very high, strong, exciting, electric attitude of tension and concern and urgency, they'll feel it over there and they'll act accordingly.

If the fabric of life in Israel were to begin to crumble in any way because of lack of money or if the immigration in Israel were to go down, for instance, because of lack of money, morale would sag, because any such developments would be signs of weakness. And then, this weakness

would feed upon itself like a vicious circle - and this vicious circle could lead to a terrible defeat. Signs of weakness would invite greater pressure from the outside. Greater pressure from the outside, and less money coming in would further erode the will to resist, and we would be on the way downhill. We cannot let that happen. Maintenance of the highest levels of financial support will ultimately win - either at the conference table toward peace, or, God forbid, if once again necessary, on the battlefield.

Let this message go out very loud and very clear to those who think that the Jarring talks make less money necessary. On the contrary, the message must now be that even more money is required for a longer pull. Let me give you some figures: On February 19th, the print out on the state of the campaign across the nation showed that just over \$111,000,000 had been raised, compared to just over \$73,000,000 of last year's money. This makes for a 51 percent increase.

Now, let's analyze those figures. Only one-quarter of the gifts above \$10,000 have come in, so there's a great deal of room to increase this level of 51% by hard soliciting. Below \$10,000, I think there's an even greater chance to obtain a higher level than an average 51 percent increase. I would beg you, therefore, at this point, not to let the campaign sag after it's gotten off with a 51 percent start. On the contrary, shoot that level up.

Let there be no false logic or false reasoning that some peace is in the air, and that this suddenly causes the need for money to disappear and evaporate. That's nonsense. We have a chance to do what's expected of us. The campaign has started well. I beg you to let it continue well, and finish well. We're only a third of the way gone. We've got

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two-thirds of the campaign remaining in which to improve what we've done so far.

I would like to summarize:

1. We're now entering the phase of territorial negotiations. There will be heavy pressure and there may even begin to be some U.S. pressure. Let me repeat that there has been no such pressure up to now, but there may begin to be pressure to withdraw totally.
2. Israel will resist this pressure. You must know that now.
3. Withdrawal will be made stage by stage in exchange for real peace - item by item.
4. Israel must be helped to remain strong during these long, difficult months of negotiation under pressure.
5. There is ever present, every day, the sudden danger of renewed hostilities if a level of frustration is reached in these negotiations. This also requires strength for the long pull.
6. Strength means money. No reduction in spending is contemplated. We must go on working as hard as we know how. Perhaps in 1971 - no promises - finally, to win. There is as good a chance that we can win peace, as that we will be forced back into war. Whichever way it goes, the effort which American Jews began so well a few months ago, must be maintained at a higher, and even more accelerated, pace.