

Israel-Jordan Armistice Talks in 1949 — A Case Study of Israel's Predilection for Direct Negotiation with the Arabs

Shlomo Perla

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The Israelis had always preferred direct negotiation, maintaining that the mediation of either U.N. representatives or an extra-regional state would eventually maneuver them into making intolerable concessions, as the presence of a third party would involve the consideration of interests not directly related to the two negotiating parties.²

The first constructive meeting between representatives of the Israeli Defence Force (I.D.F.) and the Jordanian Arab Legion took place on 29 November 1948 with the aim of bringing about an "effective" cease-fire in

Jerusalem and the Jerusalem area, including Ramallah, Beit Jalla and Latrun. Colonel Carlson of the U.N. Observers Corps, who was present at the meeting, suggested that a committee, including himself, should discuss the cease-fire issue. Dayan objected, saying that he preferred direct contact. (Abdullah Tel, the Arab Legion's Military Governor in the Arab part of Jerusalem, agreed with Dayan.)³

On 30 November 1948, Tel and Dayan reached an agreement on an "effective" cease-fire which also included Jordanian consent to a free passage of Israeli convoys to the Hebrew University and the Hadassah Hospital on the demilitarized Mt. Scopus.⁴

However, the "effective cease-fire" did not solve some of the practical problems that existed in the de facto partitioned city. These included the free passage of Jews and Arabs to Mt. Scopus and Ramallah-Bethlehem respectively; the supply of electricity to the Arab part of the city; the use of the Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem railway, etc. Thus, throughout December 1948 and January 1949, meetings were held on these issues, but without success. At one point it seemed that Dayan was about to reach an agreement with Tel, but then King Abdullah vetoed it without explanation. Dayan believed that Abdullah had been advised by the British to do so in the belief that the Israelis were experiencing critical economic difficulties and thus, by stalling the agreement, the Jordanians could force them into making greater concessions.⁵

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After the signing of the cease-fire there were further negotiations between the parties over certain other border issues, including the status of Latrun and the Arava, but these bore no meaningful results. The future of the Arava constituted a particularly complex issue because the British regarded the southern part of the Arava as an important strategic area, controlling the Gulf of Aqaba. Hence they were urging Abdullah to prevent that area from falling into Israeli hands.⁶

Israel's political leaders did not consider the cease-fire as the culmination of their political efforts. They wished to consolidate Israel's international status, which was still shaky, particularly following the General Assembly's resolution of 11 December 1948. (See *infra*.) David Ben-Gurion (B.G.), the Israeli premier, came to the logical conclusion that a peace agreement with Jordan was essential. Moreover, Israel wished to eliminate the Jerusalem issue from the international agenda to forestall any attempt to internationalize the city.

The issues to be discussed were the future of Gaza (prior to Operation Horev), Latrun, the boundaries in the Northern Sharon, and finally, Jerusalem. It was difficult to reach agreement on these issues, as they involved inter-Arab relations as well as British interests. B.G. was not going to insist on free passage for Israeli transport via Latrun to Jerusalem in view of the effective existence of the "Burma Road," but he was interested, at least before the beginning of negotiations, in keeping Latrun, even if this could be gained only by making territorial concessions to the Jordanians elsewhere.⁷

From the available documentation it is clear that there was much confusion and dispute in Israeli government circles over the complex matter of Jordan's wish to annex the West Bank. Information from some diplomatic sources indicated that Britain and France were planning to co-ordinate their Middle East policies in order to prevent American domination of the region.⁸ As disclosed in a cable from Eytan to the Israeli delegation in Paris, French officials supported a "Greater Syria" plan that would

also include Jordan as well as the Arab territories of Palestine.⁹

Certain Foreign Ministry officials thought that, given Egypt's opposition to the annexation, Israel should support Abdullah's plan, thereby contributing to the rift in the Arab League.¹⁰ Minister Y. Gruenbaum also thought that the plan was desirable because the alternative of establishing an independent Arab state in Palestine would, in fact, form a center of "Irredenta" in the very heart of the Jewish state.¹¹

Ben-Gurion was of the opposite opinion. He believed that there were basically two major factors that precluded such a plan's adoption. From a *military* point of view, B.G. feared that the annexation of the West Bank to Jordan would bring British military forces close to the very heart of the State of Israel. His opinion was based largely on an assessment presented to him by the American mission in Israel, which told him that it was Britain's intention to establish military bases in the "Arab Triangle."¹² In addition, E. Epstein, Israel's representative in Washington, stated that the American National Security Council supported these British intentions.¹³ *Politically*, B.G. was sure that Russia would disapprove of tacit Israeli consent to such a plan, which meant, in effect, a strategic consolidation of Britain in the Middle East.¹⁴ Moreover, B.G., unlike some of his colleagues, was not convinced that a confrontation with the members of the Arab League over the annexation plan was in Israel's interest.¹⁵

Sasson endeavoured to persuade B.G. that he was wrong, since an agreement with Abdullah would prevent Britain from having a pretext to establish military bases in the "Arab Triangle."¹⁶ However, B.G. noted that if the plan materialized, Iraq might create a union with Jordan, thus forming a strong Eastern front that would constitute a permanent military threat.

Despite his own argument, B.G., it appears, was not entirely sure as to the correct policy on this question. Realizing that Israel would not rule over the area in any case, B.G.'s major concern appeared to be to avoid a decision on this issue. Accordingly, in a meeting with Shertok and Shiloah,

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B.G. advised that no definite policy regarding annexation would be presented to the Jordanians nor would strong objections be voiced. He then suggested, "Tell them [Britain, Russia, the Arab states] of our political and military considerations and add that we in the Government have not yet taken any resolution on the matter. In any case," he added, "our sympathy to the plan should be conveyed to them."¹⁷ Shiloah, indeed, followed suit.¹⁸

An issue with fewer obstacles was the political future of Lydda and Ramla. The Jordanians claimed that it was important for them to gain control over these two towns in the center of Israel and resettle their Arab inhabitants there under the control of Jordanian authorities who would maintain "light military forces" there. The Israelis rejected this claim outright.¹⁹

Regarding other outstanding issues, the Israeli position was also clearer. Thus, when Abdullah tried to put out feelers regarding the Negev, B.G. ruled out any possibility of negotiating on this issue.²⁰ Regarding the "Arab Triangle," B.G. was determined to widen the narrow territorial strip in the Northern Sharon, even at the cost of another military operation. This policy of holding open both military and political options was generally a matter of essential policy in the second half of December when the Egyptians had not yet been driven out of the Negev.²¹

In several meetings between the Israelis and Jordanians, British military officers were present, causing uneasy feelings on the Israeli side. (In one case this elicited an Israeli protest.)²² This caused uneasiness on the Israeli side. It was feared that the British would hinder their Jordanian client in reaching an agreement with Israel.

Regarding the issue of Jerusalem, Israel sought to prevent the newly appointed United Nations Palestine Conciliation Commission (C.C.) from meddling in the question of the future of the city.²³ Accordingly, whenever the Jordanians appeared reluctant to go ahead with the talks,²⁴ or when it seemed that they were prevented by Britain from reaching an agreement, the Israelis

would prompt the Americans to exercise their influence to bring about a change in the Jordanian stand.²⁵

On a lower diplomatic level, contacts were also made with the French in order to seek their assistance. On 12 January 1949, Dayan called on the French Consul General to urge an immediate settlement in Jerusalem through direct negotiations between Israel and Jordan. Dayan asserted that the U.K. had prevented Abdullah from reaching an agreement, and that the credentials given to Tel were worthless. Dayan further requested the French Consul to communicate his statement to the Americans with a request that they attempt to influence the U.K. to adopt a positive attitude toward Israel's position.²⁶

The Formal Armistice Talks at Rhodes

On 16 November 1948, the United Nations Security Council resolution called upon the countries involved in the Palestinian conflict to negotiate an armistice. Negotiations with Egypt started at Rhodes, under the auspices of the United Nations on 13 January 1949, and with Jordan on 4 March. Armistice talks with Lebanon, starting on 1 March, took place at the Nakura post on the Israeli-Lebanese border.

Before the commencement of the Rhodes talks with Jordan and prior to the conclusion of the armistice negotiations with Egypt, Walter Eytan (the head of the Israeli delegation at the Israel-Egypt armistice talks) advised Shertok to formulate a detailed and somewhat exaggerated list of demands. This, he explained, would put Israel in a favorable position from the start, thus allowing it to make seemingly meaningful concessions.²⁷

On 27 February 1949, the government held a meeting to discuss Eytan's suggestions, and the next day a draft was sent to the delegation at Rhodes, containing the following instructions:

- 1) At the opening session the delegation had to make it clear that it had authority to discuss only outstanding matters between Israel and Jordan, and that it did not have any

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 discuss only outstanding matters between
 Israel and Jordan, and that it did not have any

authority to negotiate on questions pertain-
 ing to areas occupied by the Iraqi army.²⁸

2) Regarding armistice lines, the delega-
 tion should demand that the Arrah Valley
 line should run southeast of the valley so that
 the Afula-Hadera road would be in Israeli
 territory. In the northern Sharon area, the
 villages of Kalansawa and Tira should be
 included in Israel. This meant that the front
 line should be shifted eastward. The same
 should be demanded with regard to Latrun,
 namely the shifting of the line northeast-
 ward so as to liquidate the Latrun salient.

It is noteworthy that the delegation was
 clearly instructed not to raise any legal rea-
 sons for these demands, but to explain that
 they were dictated only by security consid-
 erations as well as the needs of transport
 lines. Moreover, it was also to stress that the
 suggested lines would guarantee the stab-
 ility of the armistice. The draft also con-
 tained the instruction that the 29 November
 1947 United Nations Partition Resolution
 should not be invoked, because on certain
 territorial issues it was less favorable to the
 Israeli cause.²⁹ In particular, this applied to
 the lines in the Arrah Valley, the northern
 Sharon, and Latrun.

The instructions regarding the Arava and
 Eilat were to demand that the armistice line
 be drawn along the Palestine-Jordan Manda-
 tory border, and that only minor deviations
 from it should be made only if essential for a
 successful conclusion of the armistice talks.
 In any case, the delegation should not agree
 to any delineation that would block Israel's
 free passage to Eilat. If the Jordanians in-
 sisted on a line crossing the Negev Triangle
 north of Eilat, the delegation should threaten
 to bring the matter before the Security
 Council.

3) Jerusalem: A free passage to Mt.
 Scopus and the Jewish holy shrines should
 be demanded; in return, a free passage for
 Arabs from Arab Jerusalem to Bethlehem
 would be offered. The armistice line south
 of Jerusalem should be drawn so as to place
 the railway from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem
 within Israeli territory.

4) a. Free passage to the power station in
 Naharayim and a concession for Israel
 to operate it.

b. Restoration of water supplies to the
 potassium plant in the Dead Sea area;
 free passage for Israeli vessels in that
 sea; permission to transport the prod-
 ucts of the Dead Sea industries from its
 northern part in a direct line to
 Jerusalem.

5) a. The Jordanians should agree not to
 invoke their treaty with Britain against
 Israel.

b. Great Britain would not be granted
 any rights in the areas west of the
 Jordan River.

6) The armistice agreement should not be
 interpreted as granting Jordan any rights of
 sovereignty in the areas west of the Jordan
 River.³⁰

The armistice talks with Jordan officially
 opened on 4 March, under the chairmanship
 of Dr. Ralph Bunche, the special senior
 U.N. envoy to the Middle East. The first
 stage of the talks was overshadowed by the
 Israeli military operation "Operation Uvdah
 (fact)" in the Arava aimed at creating a
 military presence in the Negev. As in pre-
 vious military operations initiated by Israel,
 Israeli diplomats again prepared the politi-
 cal ground for the operation when Shiloah
 sent a message to Bunche on 9 March in-
 forming him that Jordanian forces in the
 Negev were massing for an "invasion" of
 Israel. Burdett, the American Consul in
 Jerusalem, correctly interpreted this mes-
 sage as an Israeli effort to camouflage its
 advance in the Negev which, according to
 him, was a violation of the 15 July Security
 Council resolution.³¹

The Israeli forces encountered some op-
 position from the well-equipped Arab
 Legion units, but managed to bypass them.
 On 10 March, the advance party reached the
 Gulf of Aqaba and, without firing a shot,
 occupied the abandoned police station of
 Umm Rashrash, thereby ensuring Israel's
 outlet to the Red Sea. Umm Rashrash was
 now officially given the Biblical name,
 Eilat. The second stage of talks began with
 two meetings on 12 March, chaired by Dr.
 Bunche and dedicated to a detailed discus-
 sion concerning the drawing of the armistice
 line in Jerusalem and its immediate vicinity.
 The "vital prerequisites" of the Israelis (as

revealed in those meetings) were: a) Latrun; b) the railroad; c) a territorial link to the University and Mt. Scopus; and d) free access to the Old City and Mount of Olives.

The Jordanians' fundamental prerequisites included free use of the Jerusalem-Bethlehem road and linkage of that road with the northern part of the Arab area at the Damascus Gate. Bunche raised the possibility of demilitarizing Jerusalem, to which Dayan reacted favorably. Regarding Latrun, the Jordanians simply declared: "We are staying." Dayan, in turn, warned that this attitude might bring about a renewal of the fighting.³²

Israel's clear and resolved stand regarding armistice lines in Jerusalem was essentially determined by her apprehension that Bunche's plan would create an effective internationalization of the city. To satisfy both parties, and perhaps even to consolidate his image as a trustworthy U.N. high official, Bunche was most active in seeking a solution on the basis of placing certain significant areas in Jerusalem under U.N. control. Shiloah argued that "we will studiously avoid any arrangement which might prejudice the deliberations now taking place" on the political future of Jerusalem. "I am sure your intention was to burden the U.N. additionally only in order to bring about more normal conditions in Jerusalem, but we are apprehensive that a solution in that direction might have the opposite effect of that which is intended." He continued making it explicit that "we prefer settlements which do not involve any third party supervision." He did not differ with the Jordanian approach when adding that "I think our aim should be to arrive at a solution dependent on the two parties concerned only. The introduction of a third party, even with the best intentions, might lead to confusion, unless it is accepted as a permanent regime."³³

Shiloah also referred to (the Jordanian) Col. el-Jundi's suggestions that Israel withdraw from such areas controlling roads to Arab centers. Shiloah's argument on this point derived its strength from the favorable military position of the Israelis in the Jerusalem area.³⁴ However, with regard to

Latrun, the Israeli delegation preferred this principle to be ignored at that stage of the talks. It demanded that the Arab Legion withdraw from the Latrun road (it was that part of the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem road that went through the Latrun salient) so that Jewish transport could enjoy free passage from the coastal area to Jerusalem.³⁵ On 16 March, the two delegations decided that insofar as Jerusalem was concerned, it would be very difficult to achieve a successful agreement at Rhodes. Hence they came to an informal agreement that the part of the demarcation of armistice lines in the proposed armistice agreement which related to the Jerusalem area would be based on existing lines (which meant those of 30 November 1948), and that all existing arrangements — including those covering Mt. Scopus and Government House area — would be the basis for that part of the draft agreement relating to the Jerusalem area.³⁶

From that juncture until a few days before the conclusion of the talks, it was debatable whether or not Latrun was included in the agreement. The Jordanians rightly maintained that Latrun was included in the agreement as it had always been an integral part of the Jerusalem issue. Bunche himself supported this attitude. The Israelis, on the other hand, now preferred to present the Latrun issue as a separate one. Dayan even argued that the inclusion of Latrun in the agenda of future meetings "could bring no harm, since at a later stage something might arise in exchange for which the Jordan delegations would be happy to come to an agreement on Latrun."³⁷ However, it soon became clear that there was little chance that the Jordanians would withdraw from Latrun. Latrun, which had been a major Israeli military target in the first stages of war, appeared at the Rhodes talks to be of only secondary significance on the Israeli list of priorities. The degree of assertiveness that Israel demonstrated in negotiating a specific territorial issue was a function of her military performance in the fighting over that specific territory. Thus, her territorial demands at the negotiation table became moderate when negotiating the future of an area where her military performance had been poor. Latrun was one such case.

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The third stage of the talks began on 13 March 1949, after Israel had received intelligence that the Iraqi army was about to evacuate its positions in the front line, and that those positions were to be occupied by the Arab Legion.³⁹ Israel protested this move as a violation of Paragraph 6, subparagraph 5 of the United Nations Mediator's note dated 7 June 1948.⁴⁰ The letter of protest concluded with the covert threat that the Government of Israel "reserves all its existing rights in the present situation".

Israel's protest appeared to be somewhat incongruous. From a purely legal point of view, it is difficult to determine whether Israel had a strong case. After all, the balance of power was not disrupted, as it was only a matter of substituting the Jordanians for the Iraqis. Israel's protest may thus be interpreted as aiming at creating a de facto position that would make her demand to control the Wadi Arra areas appear more acceptable in the future stages of the armistice negotiations.⁴¹ Indeed, in December 1948, the Israelis had urged the Jordanians to persuade the Iraqis, who controlled a vital route from central to northern Israel, to evacuate their forward positions in the Triangle and to deploy three Jordanian police units instead. The Israelis added a promise that, if the Jordanian king was prepared to accept that arrangement, they would respect the existing lines in the Triangle until the conclusion of the peace talks.⁴² In response, the King immediately began urging the Iraqis to evacuate their forces from the Triangle.⁴³ It is also notable that in spite of Eytan's official protest to Mohn, it was doubtful whether Israel had any legal case in demanding the Legion's withdrawal from the Triangle in terms of the 29 November 1947 lines.⁴⁴

It may therefore be assumed that the F.M. attempted to exploit the situation of the Iraqi withdrawal to achieve a long-desired territorial gain, obtaining the Triangle from Jordan through persuasion and negotiation. Israel apparently also decided to avoid any military campaign to achieve that purpose, as such a move could have severely jeopardized Israel's international status in general, and its admission to U.N. membership in

particular. Accordingly, Israel's peaceful intentions were explicitly conveyed to Abdullah.⁴⁵

For the Jordanians, the Triangle issue had a special significance. King Abdullah could not appear to the Arab world as a "traitor" who handed over "Arab Lands" to the Zionists. He was aware of the fact that some of his ministers, including the premier, rejected Israel's demand. Hence the Jordanian delegation at Rhodes was not empowered to negotiate on this issue, and it was left for high-ranking talks that took place in Jerusalem and Shuneh (where King Abdullah had his summer house). Eytan was in charge of that section of the contacts that were made directly with the King or with his immediate confidant, Tel, or his personal physician, Dr. Shwakat Aziz al Satti. Also, these high level negotiations were necessary for avoiding any misconception of the real intentions of each party, particularly after certain indications that Abdullah had not been aware until mid-March of the real intentions of the Israelis regarding the Triangle.⁴⁶

At a meeting between Dayan and Tel on 18 March, the former clearly explained Israel's demands regarding the Triangle. It was agreed that on the next day Tel would return with a reply in principle from the King, while Dayan would be equipped with accurate maps marking the Iraqi positions to clarify Israel's demands. When Tel remarked that Arab public opinion made it possible for them to accept Israel's demands, Dayan's reaction was "You have to choose one of two possibilities: you either do not substitute (sic) the Iraqis or you undertake to accept Israel's demand but by carrying it out gradually so that the changes would not be noticed in the short run."⁴⁷

These contacts were conducted in absolute secrecy. Even the two delegations at Rhodes had no information of the developments, and in fact there was an informal break in the talks from 18 to 23 March. This apparently caused Shiloah such embarrassment that he intended to leave for Israel unless he received the proper information and instructions for the continuation of the talks.⁴⁸

On the evening of 21 March, Tel informed Dayan that everyone on the Jordanian side was ready to sign an agreement on the basis that had been outlined in Shuneh, and on 23 March the treaty was signed.⁴⁹

The agreement was regarded by Sharett as a "tremendous diplomatic victory." Given the fact that Israel received Jordanian villages, wholly Arab in population and situated in territory formerly under Arab control, Sharett did not exaggerate. In the final analysis, this gain may be attributed to Israel's apparent readiness to exercise her military option. But what is more important is that it vindicated Israel's instincts that agreements may be reached only after mediating elements have been neutralized.

The Problem of the British Military Presence

An important military issue in the Israel-Jordanian armistice talks concerned the reduction of forces on both sides of the armistice line. From the very outset of the discussions it was apparent that in matters of principle there was little difference of opinion on this point between the parties. Each declared its willingness to reduce armaments to the extent that the other side would be satisfied.⁵⁰ It was promptly decided that each of the delegations would form a subcommittee to deal with the technical aspects of that arrangement, as it was agreed upon that the size of the reduction would vary from one front to the other. The Israeli-Jordanian frontier was divided into three sections for that purpose:

- 1) Budrus to 30 November line in the north, together with 30 November line in the south to the Dead Sea.
- 2) Jerusalem
- 3) from the Dead Sea south to the Gulf of Aqaba.⁵¹

However, this apparently idyllic atmosphere was disturbed when Shiloah raised the question of the presence of British military forces along certain sections of the Jordanian side of the proposed armistice lines. It was, he explained, a legal problem since the undertaking of the principle of

reciprocal reduction of forces made it incumbent on Jordan to see to it that *all* military factors that might be used against Israel should be included in the agreement.⁵²

Bunche tried to allay Shiloah's fears by informing him that "the United Nations has been given the firmest assurance by the British that those forces are there in accordance with a treaty engagement, and that those forces will under no conditions cross over into Palestine territory." Colonel el Jundi added that it was not in any case within the terms of reference of the Jordan delegation to deal with this question. Major Hindawi, another member of the Jordanian delegation, added a categorical statement that "in the evaluation of (the) forces, only the Jordan forces should be taken into account and not the British forces, too."⁵³

Shiloah made it clear that Israel was concerned only with the military implications of the British presence in Jordan, particularly when British troops were stationed in the immediate vicinity of the proposed armistice line. "If you put them in Mafrak or anywhere else, I don't care. . . . But an armistice line is an armistice line, and we want to know that at least we will have an equality of forces on both sides of the line. . . ."⁵⁴

In the face of the Jordanian hardline attitude, Shiloah suggested that Dayan raise this question in one of his talks with Abdullah.⁵⁵ Simultaneously, Shiloah himself met with Riad Muflakh (considered Abdullah's confidant in the Jordanian delegation), who explained to him that the Jordanians could only undertake that the British forces would not cross the border into Israeli territory, but no more than that.⁵⁶

Dayan, it is noteworthy, thought that Israel did not have a strong legal or political case in demanding the inclusion of the British forces in the reduction agreement. This was because Jordan could not oblige the British Empire to honor an agreement not necessarily in accord with its own legitimate interests in the Middle East. Deadlock might then lead to the Jordanians retaking control over the southernmost part of the Negev.⁵⁷

On the evening of 21 March, Tel informed Dayan that everyone on the Jordanian side was ready to sign an agreement on the basis that had been outlined in Shuneh, and on 23 March the treaty was signed.⁴⁹

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Sasson, on the other hand, begged Abdullah to assure the Israeli government that it was within his power to guarantee that "the Anglo-Jordan Treaty will not be applied — either now or in the future — to the Arab areas of Palestine which you control at present."⁵⁸

Dayan's stand was finally accepted, and Israel ceased making an issue of that question. The fact that an armistice agreement was reached, and that this was the outcome of direct bilateral negotiations was a sufficient guarantee.

On 3 April 1949 an armistice agreement between Israel and "the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom" was signed. Israel did not succeed in improving her strategic position in the Latrun salient. However, from a general political and strategic viewpoint her position was substantially improved, especially due to her success in broadening her territory in the Sharon. According to the *Palestine Post* of 5 April, it was learnt in Tel-Aviv that some 150 square miles of Palestine territory would accrue to Israel when the terms of the armistice agreement had been fulfilled.⁵⁹ Furthermore, Israel's control of the northern

mountainous area of the Shomron had greater strategic importance than the size of the territory she was to annex.

Not all political parties in Israel welcomed the agreement. Mapam and Herut opposed it on the grounds that the agreement referred to "the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom," thus implying recognition of Abdullah's "expansionist aims" in the West Bank; made possible the establishment of British bases on Palestine soil; and was not a move toward peace, but instead a perpetual threat of war.⁶⁰

B.G. refuted these arguments in a Knesset debate on 4 April. He noted that the agreement stabilized Israel's position in the Middle East and improved her political status internationally, citing Turkey's readiness to recognize Israel.⁶¹

The Israel-Jordan armistice agreement was effected through direct negotiations and outside the formal U.N. framework that had been set up for this purpose. From Israel's point of view this in itself was a meaningful achievement: by reaching this bilateral agreement, she had manifested her sovereignty in the most unequivocal way. ■

NOTES

1. Shertok to Eban, 4 November 1948. Israel State Archives (I.S.A.), Foreign Ministry (F.M.) files 182/7 (I.S.A. F.M.).

2. General Y. Yadin advised Moshe Dayan to conduct all future negotiations on a direct basis, even if they had to be undertaken through radio transmission. See: *Ben-Gurion Diaries*, 26 November 1948. Ben-Gurion Archives, Sde Boker, ("Diaries.")

Indeed, the principle of direct negotiation was "fiercely attacked by Hector McNeil at one of the recent sessions of the Security Council." Jewish Agency Digest (J.A.D.) No. 12, p. 7 (a report of the *Palestine Post* 21 December 1948.) See also instructions on this point given to Foreign Ministry Director General Eytan by Foreign Minister Shertok, 9 November 1948. I.S.A. F.M. 182/1.

3. *Diaries*, 29 November 1948.

4. Dayan, *Avnei Derech*, p. 80, N. Lorch, *Korot Milchemet Ha'atzmaut*, Tel-Aviv 1958 ("Korot"), p. 473, and *Diaries*, 29 November 1948.

On the same day, a conference took place in Jericho with the participation of representatives of the Arab population of the West Bank, at which it was decided to annex the West Bank to Transjordan. Abdullah was aware that some Israeli ministers objected, and he was accordingly quick to reach the agreement in order to minimize the risk of an Israeli attack.

5. See: Burdett to the Secretary of State, 29 January 1949; Papers of C.M. Clifford in The H.S. Truman Library; and McDonald to the Secretary of State, 17 December 1948, *ibid*.

6. The Arava formed a particular concern for the Jordanians too, particularly after Operation Lot, which brought the area under complete Israeli control. See *Korot*, p. 454-456, and *Diaries*, 6 January 1949.

7. Shiloah to Shertok, 20 November 1948, I.S.A. F.M. 182/7.

8. The future of the Arab territories was an issue which also attracted the attention of the major powers and of certain other states which had interests in the Mediterranean basin. Turkey, for instance, supported the annexation of the West Bank by Jordan, whereas Italy wanted the Arab territories to be divided among the members of the Arab League. See: secret cable, Eytan to Paris, 16 December 1949. I.S.A. F.M. 181/8.

9. *Ibid*.

10. See: *Diaries*, 16 December 1948, and secret cable, Sasson to Shertok, 19 December 1948. I.S.A. F.M. 181/1.

11. *Diaries*, 19 December 1948.

12. The strip of land in the northern Sharon between Um-al-Fahm and Kefar Qassim.

13. *Diaries*, 12 December 1948.

14. *Diaries*, 18 December 1948.

15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, 31 December 1948.
17. *Diaries*, 4 January 1949.
18. Shiloah to B.G., 6 January 1949. State of Israel, Documents of the Foreign Policy of Israel, Vol. 3, Doc. 184 (I.D.).
19. Shimon to B.G. and Sharett, 14 February 1949, I.D. 3 190.
20. *Diaries*, 6 January 1949.
21. Sasson to Shertok, 19 December 1948. I.S.A. F.M. 1818/1.
- In American sources Israel's option was defined as one of "peace or war." See: McDonald to the Secretary of State, 6 January 1949. Papers of C.M. Clifford.
22. See: *Diaries*, 15 January 1949, and Dayan to Dori, 12 February 1949. I.D. 3 189.
- In a meeting between Sasson and Abdullah on 30 January, the King explained that the British were not against negotiations, but that they had urged him to insist on certain "essential issues." Sasson to Sharett, 1 February 1949. I.D. 3 186.
23. The U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution to establish a mediating commission on 11 Dec. 1948.
24. On 23 December 1948 the American representative in Amman, Stabler, reported that "the King and Prime Minister have decided to consider any plan in writing proposed by Israel, but any negotiations concerning it must await the arrival of the Conciliation Commission..." Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States (F.R.U.S.) V, p. 1674.
- This means using the Americans.
25. Epstein to Shertok, 10 January 1949. I.S.A. F.M. 2308/8.
- In January 1949, when Samir Rifai (former Prime Minister of Transjordan and Special Emissary of King Abdullah) visited the U.S.A., Epstein advised Shertok that it was opportune to appeal to the Americans to persuade Abdullah through Rifai to reach an agreement with Israel.
- For summaries of Rifai's talks with the Americans, see F.R.U.S. VI, p. 647-649.
- Regarding Truman's intervention on behalf of Israel in his meeting with Rifai, and Epstein's strong diplomatic action at the White House on this matter, see: Epstein to Shertok, 21 January 1949. I.S.A. F.M. 2308/8.
26. Burdett to the Secretary of State, 13 January 1949. F.R.U.S. V, p. 661.
27. Eytan to Sharett, 16 February 1949. I.D. 3 194.
28. According to information received in mid-January, Iraq was prepared to enter into armistice negotiations with Israel. *Diaries*, 17 January 1949.
29. See: "Instructions to the Israeli Delegation to the Armistice Negotiations with Jordan (draft)," 28 February 1949. I.D. 3 197
30. *Ibid.*
31. F.R.U.S., VI, p. 814.
32. See: Meeting of the Delegations of Israel and Jordan, 12 March 1949. I.D. 3 49.
33. Meetings of the Delegations of Israel and Jordan, 16 March 1949. I.D. 3 231, p. 436.
34. *Ibid.*, 437.
35. Eytan to Abdullah, 20 March 1949. I.D. 3 241.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 439.
37. *Ibid.*, 441 and see also: *Meetings of the Delegations of Israel and Jordan*, 24 March 1949, I.D. 3 252, pp. 470-481.
38. Eytan to Shiloah, 24 March 1949. I.S.A. F.M. 2431/1. Regarding the military concern, see: Eytan to Shiloah, 20 March 1949. I.D. 3 243.
39. *Diaries*, 14 March 1949.
40. This clause read: "Movements of troops or war material from one interested country to another, or closer to the borders of Palestine, or to the fighting fronts of Palestine, are prohibited during the period of the truce." See: *Security Council Official Records* (S.C.O.R.) Doc. S/829.
41. For full text of Israel's protest, see: Eytan to Mohn, 13 March 1949. I.S.A. F.M. 2948/3.
42. Telephone conversation: Sasson to A. Tel., Jerusalem, 13 December 1948. I.S.A. F.M. 3738/8.
43. Meeting: Shiloah, Dayan and A. Tel., Jerusalem, 20 December 1948. I.S.A. F.M. 3738/8.
44. See: Shiloah to Sharett, 9 March 1949. I.D. 3 205.
45. See: Eytan to Abdullah, 15 March 1949. I.S.A. F.M. 2948/1. See also: Eytan to Shiloah, 15 March 1949. I.S.A. F.M. 2948/1.
46. See: Eytan to Shiloah, 15 March 1949. I.S.A. F.M. 2948/1.
47. Tel regarded the second option as a "secret" agreement. See: Dayan to Eytan, 18 March 1949. I.D. 3 236.
48. See: Shiloah to Eytan, 23 March 1949. I.S.A. F.M. 2948/3.
49. For a description of those meetings see: Eytan to Sharett, 23 to 24 March 1949. I.S.A. F.M. 64/1, and *Diaries*, 23 and 24 March 1949.
50. Meeting of the Delegations etc., 17 March 1949. I.D. 3 233.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. Shiloah to Eytan, 17 March 1949. I.S.A. F.M. 2948/1.
56. Shiloah to Eytan, 18 March 1949. I.S.A. F.M., *ibid.*
57. Dayan to Eytan, 20 March 1949. I.D. 3 244.
58. *Ibid.*
59. J.A.D., 1949. 27/10.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*, 27/26.