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## THE GOLAN AND ASSAD'S 'HUMAN' FACE

THE oft-quoted Resolution 242 of the UN Security Council after the Six Day War has unusual, perhaps even unique, characteristics: on the victim of blatant aggression it conferred the status of aggressor, and on the victor it imposed conditions of defeat. The Egyptians and the Syrians did not bother to charge Israel with any misdemeanor to explain their aggression. They simply blazoned forth to the world their belief that the time was ripe and conditions on the ground appropriate for the act of annihilation which they had ceaselessly promised.

"Just so"; because Israel existed, and they objected to its existence. On June 1, 1967, Egyptian president Nasser, then leader of the movement to destroy Israel, who had been keeping an eager Arab world on tenterhooks following his expulsion of the UN observers from Sinai, epitomized the threat: "We have waited long enough," he exclaimed. "Let's finish with Israel and be done with it.

No more words. Nature's gift to a potential aggressor. Surely enough, the Syrians after 1948 turned the Heights into one large base, a mass of fortifications - and little else - for harassing Israel. Life in northern Galilee became a purgatory.

Over the years it was subjected to intermittent shelling, purely at the whim of the Syrian dictator. Children in the villages of Galilee spent a large part of their lives in shelters fitted out as school rooms. Yet it was only when Syria launched its aggression in 1967 that Israel sent its army to climb the Heights.

These were captured at heavy cost and revealed to the world the complex anatomy of Syrian designs on the life of Israel. Then it became clear to everybody that on no account could Israel risk the Golan's ever again falling into Syrian hands. If and when peace should be achieved with Syria, no territorial element could be allowed into the negotiations; and a thriving Jewish community was gradually built up on the heights.

Nevertheless, after Syria's further aggression in the Yom Kippur War, the US secretary of state in 1974 cynically persuaded the Golda Meir government to agree to a partial (though admittedly not very substantial) withdrawal of Israeli forces). Mrs Meir's successor, Yitzhak Rabin, decided to regard that withdrawal as satisfying the requirements of Resolution 242. In his long inaugural address as prime minister he told the Knesset on June 3, 1974: "As for Syria, after attainment of the separation-of-forces agreement and its implementation to the letter, there is no place for an interim stage.

Once we achieve further progress in a settlement with Egypt, the question will arise whether Syria is indeed ready to sign a peace treaty with Israel." It was surely in that spirit that the Begin government acted, with the consent of the Knesset, to bring the Golan within the bounds, de facto, of Israeli sovereignty. Now Mr Rabin has admitted that that line on the Golan (which evidently did establish a local security balance between Israel and Syria) has been the most tranquil of Israel's borders. But he has evidently forgotten his own sensible pronouncement of June 1974 on its finality.

Suddenly, in Labor's obsessive policy of scuttle, he gives Resolution 242 renewed born-again status, and promises surrenders of territory on the Golan. To the manifest betrayal of the security about which he constantly pontificates he even adds the vicious

corollary that he is prepared to reduce the number of Jewish communities on the Golan - that he is prepared, in plain language, to "transfer" Jews off the Golan. The odor of these promises is not improved by the Israeli government's grotesque efforts to attach a human face to Assad.

His attitude has changed, they say; and Foreign Minister Peres clowningly proclaims to avid European listeners that the change is "sensational." This is monstrous and foolish: the only real change in Assad's attitude lies in his willingness to set out in writing for Israel what he has always said: that there will be no peace with Israel except if it hands over the Golan Heights holus-bolus and, moreover, withdraws from "all the territories" etc. What price is the people of Israel expected to pay for Mr Rabin and his colleagues to learn this truth?