

# A lasting peace?

There is an interim peace in the Middle East.

Egypt and Israel, main protagonists in the world's most volatile region, signed on September 5 a peace agreement that says, among others, that the "conflict between them and in the Middle East shall not be resolved by military force but by peaceful means...not to resort to the threat or use of force of military blockade against each other."

War is hell, and the absence of tranquility anywhere is a matter of concern for the Philippines. Due to the closeness of relations the Philippines has with such Middle East countries as Egypt, the interim disengagement, though viewed with cynicism by some sectors, is therefore a welcome development for the Philippines.

In December 1974, President Marcos said the Philippines will continue to support the October 1974 resolution of the United Nations Security Council seeking the return of lands occupied by Israel. Talking to Saudi Arabian Deputy Foreign Minister Sheik Ibrahim Al Sultan, President Marcos assured the Arab leader of the Philippines' aiding belief in the right of peoples to self-determination. He reiterated that the Philippines renounces war as an instrument of national policy.

At the 28th and 29th regular sessions of the U.N. General Assembly, Foreign Secretary Carlos P. Romulo, on Presidential instructions, carried out the Philippine stand on the Middle East question. This was listed as instruction no. 8 to Romulo, head of the delegation which stated: "On the Middle East question, the delegation shall be guided by Resolution 242 of the Security Council which calls for the withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories occupied in the 1967 war and the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people as well as the rejection of the principle of occupation of territory by force."

"We in the Philippines hope more than ever that the scourge of war will be banished in the Middle East, and that a just peace will follow, and allow all people in the Middle East to pursue the creative endeavor of building even more stable societies and to realize fully the genius of their race."

It will be recalled that as early as 1947, Secretary Romulo, then U.N. President, said that the Middle East issue was primarily moral and that the enforcement of the partition policy was "repugnant to the valid nationalist aspirations of the people of Palestine."

Several Middle East leaders have visited the Philippines in the past years. The foreign ministers of Somalia, Libya, Senegal and Saudi Arabia came here in 1973.

The past wars and recent tension in the Middle East had resulted in economic dislocation for the people in the area and elsewhere. The 1972 "October War" between Israel and Egypt/Syria affected the Philippines in form of the quadrupling of oil prices in 1972-1973. As a gesture of support to Egypt and Syria, other Arab countries like Saudi Arabia and Iraq declared unprecedented increases in the prices of crude oil.



Analyzing the September agreement, John Chadwick of Reuters said the Israelis are under no illusion that the pact with Egypt marks the end of the troubles. Chadwick says the settlement merely diffused tensions. Israel is reported to have served notice that it has not decided whether to conduct interim peace talks with Syria though a government source says negotiations may begin in several months. The U.N. mandate guarding the ceasefire line on the Golan Heights expires on November 30.

The maneuver on the Golan Heights, involving Syria, is a highly sensitive issue in Israel. The Golan escarpment and

plateau were wrested from the Syrians in 1967 after fierce fighting. For years, earlier Israeli farm settlements in the Huleh Valley had been shelled by Syrian guns from the top.

The Third Arab-Israeli war broke out on June 5, 1967 and the following day Egypt closed the Strategic Suez Canal. For the current interim, the canal has been reopened and Israel was reported to be looking for a ship not flying its own flag but bound for an Israeli port for a test run through the Suez to see if Egypt will honor one of the concessions granted in the recent peace pact. —GLORIA JANE BAYLON



Mrs. Imelda R. Marcos and Foreign Affairs Secretary Carlos P. Romulo listen to a speech during the proceedings of the UN General Assembly. The First Lady in a speech before the Assembly called for an international "code of ethics." (UPI)

## Around the World

### HELP FROM THE NORTH

Tokyo (UPI) — Japan will promote development of oil resources in Southeast Asia and South America to help reduce its heavy dependence on the Middle East, government sources said last week. They said the government will also try to increase its crude imports from China and Indonesia. Japan's imports of crude oil and refined products for the current fiscal year ending March 31 amount to 1.655 billion barrels, according to a government forecast. Crude oil from the Middle East accounts for nearly 77 percent of the imports. The ministers present agreed to diversify oil import sources and step up efforts to develop untapped resources in Southeast Asia and Latin America.

### ASEAN SUMMIT SOON

Singapore (UPI) — Senior officials of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) concluded recently a meeting to prepare the way for a summit among heads of government of member countries within the next six months. A brief joint press statement issued at the end of the closed-door meeting said the officials agreed to refer proposals for greater ASEAN economic cooperation to the ASEAN planning senior officials' meeting scheduled in Jakarta in October. The proposals will then be submitted to a meeting of ASEAN ministers for economic planning. Sources said the proposals included the establishment of free trade zones leading ultimately to a common market.

### A 'NOMINAL' INCREASE?

Vienna (UPI) — The minister of Saudi Arabia, the world's leading oil exporter, wants a freeze on oil prices or, at most, a nominal increase of less than 10 percent. Other oil producers have spoken of boosting prices to as much as 35 percent.

The 13-nation oil cartel, which has boosted prices 500 percent in the past five years, decided in Gabon last June to readjust prices at the Vienna meeting to offset losses in their earnings that resulted from Western inflation and recession. Since then, OPEC members have become increasingly divided as to the wisdom of a price increase at this time.

### THE END OF SEATO

United Nations (UPI) — The Council of Ministers of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) has decided to phase out the alliance within two years. US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger representing the United States agreed to the termination of SEATO, whose other members are Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and the Philippines.

Diplomatic sources said the council decided to phase out SEATO since it has become obsolete and is no longer needed in view of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the SEATO nations and the People's Republic of China, and the US-China rapprochement. Foreign Secretary Carlos Romulo made a brief statement at the meeting where he recalled he once suggested to phase out SEATO three years ago in Canberra, Australia.