

Israeli official tells of Egyptian talks

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By BRIGHTMAN BROCK
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Sixty people at Spring Hill College Monday night heard the chairman of the Israeli Council on International Relations tell why he favors United Nations mediations by one person rather than multiple-member conciliation commissions.

Speaking in an English accent, Walter Eytan reflected on actual experiences he had as head of the Israeli delegation to the Armistice Negotiations with Egypt in 1949

and the "Atoms for Peace" conference in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1955.

Israel, he said, during a lecture on "Techniques of Arab-Israeli Negotiations," has always insisted on direct negotiations with opposing parties, as was the case in 1949. As later proved by that success, it provides the "only effective way" for efficient negotiations, Eytan said.

He explained that another country will not negotiate by "the direct process — face to face in one room" — if they "do not want to recognize the existence of the other."

Eytan praised the direct method used by a U.N. negotiation in 1949, a time when Egypt and Israel sat down to negotiate an armistice.

That negotiator convinced the Egyptians to meet with their enemies in one council room, even though they had been instructed not to speak to their Jewish counterparts by their superiors. The U.N. negotiator knew that it was "not possible for two groups to sit any length of time in one room without sooner or later making contact."

Contact, in this successful instance, happened when the Egyptians became infuriated at one member of the Israeli delegation for a "remark he had made." From that point on, the Egyptians spoke directly to the Israelis rather than giving their conditions directly to the mediator.

"The exact opposite happened" a few months later, he said, when a three-member conciliation team ineffectively tried to negotiate among the Israelis and the Egyptians, Jordanians, Syrians and Lebanese.



ISRAELI COUNCILMAN SPEAKS — Renowned lecturer Walter Eytan, chairman of the Israeli Council on International Relations, reflected on his experiences throughout the 1948-49 Israeli-Egyptian negotiations during his lecture Monday night at Spring Hill College. (Mobile Register photo by J.P. Schaffner)

The conciliation team "made a mistake ... of altering sides." In essence, they grouped all of Israel's enemies together under one roof while they privately negotiated with them. Afterwards, they negotiated with the Israeli delegation, Eytan said. The switching back and forth continued.

"Never once was there direct negotiating" between the Israelis and the Arabs, said Eytan. That "unsuccessful technique" continued for half a year.

The three-member U.N. commission consisted of the then-editor of the Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal; a Turkish delegate who was over 80 years old and also a journalist; and a French diplomat, he said.

"The result was that they each reported to the U.N. ... And each of the three indirectly was also reporting to his own government. Three sets of instructions" were the product, said Eytan.