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Finally, in the more speculative area, the General suggests that the reasons why the NSA messages never reached the *Liberty* was that 'the close cooperation of the CIA with Israeli intelligence had reached such a peak in 1967 that our whole intelligence network was thick with people involved in that cooperation—not necessarily agents—just guys who were helping along the close cooperation of the Agency and Mossad.' Pearson speculates that the affair has been hushed up by the United States because Israel threatened to retaliate by exposing the CIA's 'destablization' policies against the radical Arab states in the 1960's.

Peter Mansfield, who reviewed the book, concludes by stating: "Of course we cannot be certain about this, but there is enough fact and convincing circumstantial evidence in this book to cause the deepest alarm, not only to Americans but to any citizens of the world, about the consequences of the U.S.—Israeli alliance. There is one slightly encouraging possibility suggested by this book. Could it be that Israel's relative intelligence failure in 1973 was due to the double-cross of 1967 and a consequently greater reluctance on the part of the Americans to cooperate with Mossad?"⁶⁴

Delmar NY 1977

XIX River Jordan Irrigation Project

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 R#181

Israeli Encroachment

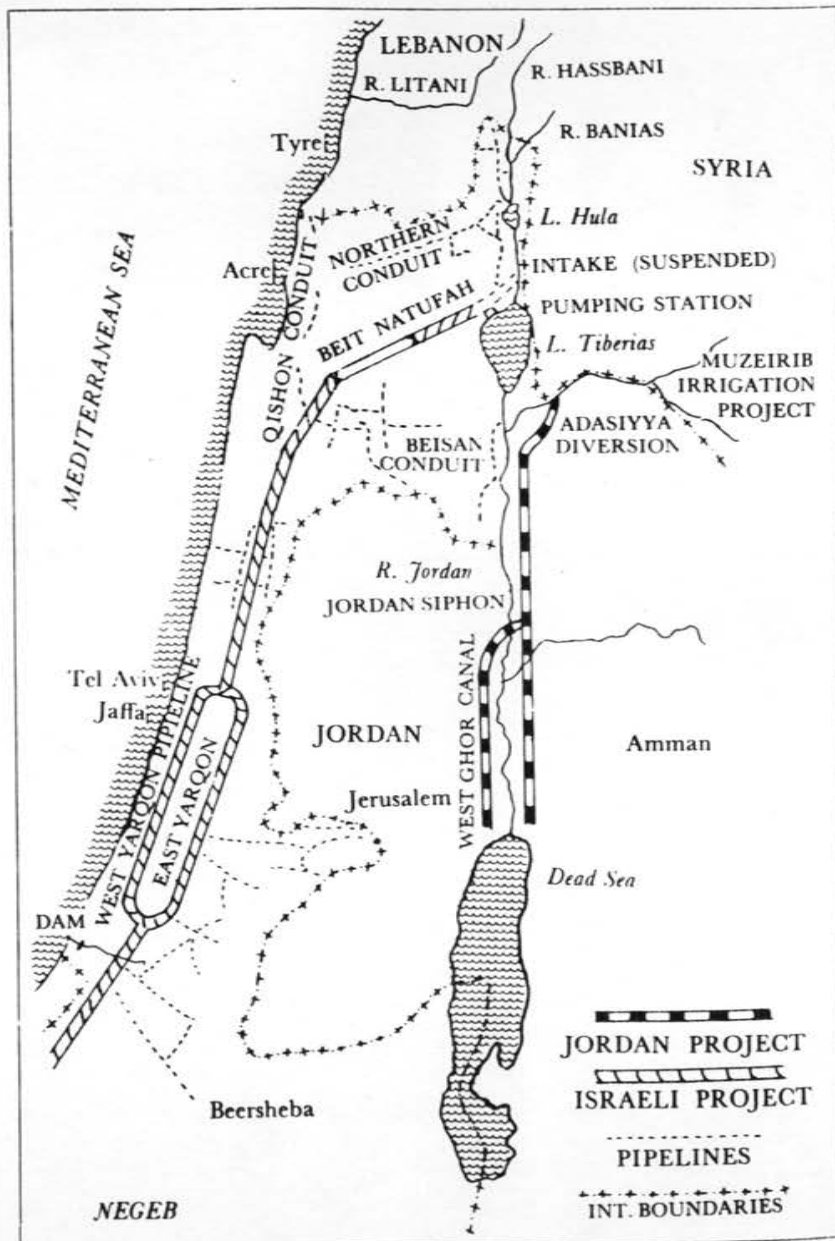
A further Israeli encroachment on Arab rights took place through the diversion of the waters of the River Jordan. The project, which cost some \$150 million, took ten years to complete. Pumping started in August 1964.

The Israelis maintain that their project conforms in every respect with what became known as the 'Johnston Plan', and as such, is, in their view, permissible.

This is inaccurate. There is no such thing as a 'Johnston Plan'. Mr. Johnston made it clear, when he first visited the Middle East, that it was not a 'plan', or even a 'scheme', he was submitting to the parties, but a mere *proposal*, "a broad conception," he said, "of what might be done, offered as a basis for discussion and negotiation." The 'proposal' suggested that 60% of the water should go to Lebanon, Syria and Jordan and the remaining 40% to the Israelis.

Mr. Johnston, as the emissary of President Eisenhower, was received by the Arab States and listened to with respect, befitting the position he held. But this did not mean that his 'proposal' was binding upon the Arabs. It was carefully considered and rejected, not only because of its technical deficiencies, but mainly because it attempted to liquidate the Palestine Problem by means of economic formulae and prescriptions. The cardinal sin of the proposal lay in the fact that it completely ignored the political nature of the Problem. Furthermore, the armistice demarcation lines—which specify Arab-Israeli relationship—were not shown on the maps attached to the survey, to indicate how the Israeli reservoir and water-pipes would cut across the boundaries between the Arab and Jewish states under the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947. The 'proposal' regarded the political entities in the area as mere territories in a water-shed which were required to pool their energies and their water resources for the improvement of their economic conditions regardless of the political situation. In short, the Johnston 'proposal' concentrated chiefly on a solution of Israel's water problems to make possible the immigration and integration of several millions of new immigrants into the Negeb—thus consolidating Israel's economic and military power and enabling it to embark upon further expansion into neighbouring Arab territory. No consideration whatsoever was given to what was to become of the Palestine Arabs, whose lands the Israelis intended to irrigate under the Johnston 'proposal'. Under such circumstances, is it reasonable to expect the Arab States to acquiesce in such a one-sided scheme?

To augment their argument, the Israelis further claim that since Syria and Jordan were utilizing the waters of the Yarmuk River solely to Arab



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advantage, they have every right to divert the waters of the Jordan to whatever area they saw fit.

One important factor the Israelis fail to reveal. The Arab Yarmuk project is designed *not to divert* but to *put to better use* the waters of the River entirely *within* the river-bed in the Jordan Valley. Not one drop of water is being pumped out of the area and not one foot of Jewish-owned land is being deprived of its water. The Israeli project, on the other hand, takes away the Jordan waters *outside* the river-bed some 150 miles away to the Negev and before the needs of Arab land in the Jordan Valley have been satisfied. Whereas the Arab action is logical and permissible under international law, the Israeli action is not.

A further argument the Israelis use to win public support, is that their plans are no more than a scheme to carry water from within Israel's own borders to irrigate 'the neglected parched and desert lands of the Negev'—situated also within its own territory—that Arab opposition was unjustified and was merely designed to create trouble for Israel.

On the face of it, the Israeli approach might appear innocent. But apart from its irrigation aspects, the project has great political implications which can neither be ignored nor minimized. These are:

1. To utilize every tract of land and thus make it impossible for the Palestine Arabs to return to their homes and lands;
2. To make room for a greater influx of Jewish immigrants in order to provide the necessary manpower to expand further into Arab territory and realize the Zionist dream of an 'empire' from the 'Nile to the Euphrates';
3. To render ineffective all United Nations resolutions and directives on Palestine.

The Arab point of view is that Israel's diversion of the waters of the River Jordan is not a simple water project 'within its own borders' to irrigate land legally owned by Jews in Palestine, which the Arab States are attempting to obstruct by what some misinformed writers have described as a 'dog-in-the-manger' attitude. Much more is at stake than the public has been given to understand. The Israeli scheme involves the rights and property of individual Palestine Arabs who have been expelled and dispossessed of their lands by force of arms, as well as the rights and interests of Arab cultivators in the Jordan Valley.

The Arab States' refusal to participate with the Israelis in any irrigation scheme put forward by United States experts, or to acquiesce in Israel's present unilateral action, is basic and stems from the fact that the River Jordan project is an integral part of the Palestine Problem as a whole. It must be treated within an overall solution of that problem, not nibbled at, to serve the interests of Israel alone. *Any Arab agreement at this stage, will mean signing away the rights of the Palestine Arabs in their homeland and will be interpreted as an implied acceptance of the present armistice demarcation line as the permanent boundaries of Israel.*

Israeli tactics have, from time to time, attempted to obtain advantages by political pressures and influences outside an overall settlement of the Palestine Problem, such as passage of Israeli shipping through the Suez Canal and now a *de facto* recognition of the 'armistice demarcation lines' as the permanent boundaries of the 'Jewish State' once the River Jordan

diversion project is agreed to. But Arab conviction has invariably held—and will continue to hold—that all of these matters are side issues of the main Palestine conflict and cannot be dealt with piecemeal. They are all part of the Palestine Arabs' right to their homeland. And until Arab rights are redeemed, the Arabs will not cease to oppose, with all the means at their disposal, any project which detrimentally affects the Palestine Arabs' rights and interests.

It will be recalled that the division of the waters of the River Jordan between the Arab States and Israel outside an overall solution of the Palestine Problem was regarded by the United Nations Economic Survey Mission as not feasible. The Survey Mission visited the Middle East in 1949 with the aim of examining the possibility of an economic approach to the Palestine Problem. In its recommendations, the Survey Mission had this to say about the development of the Jordan Valley:

"In the absence of a peace settlement between Israel and adjoining countries on outstanding issues involving repatriation and compensation of Arab refugees and territorial boundaries, it is unrealistic to suppose that agreement on the complex question of international water rights could be negotiated among the parties. . . . Whatever promise the full development of the Jordan River system may hold for better living and economic productivity in the Middle East, this must await a mutual desire to create and share benefits from a better use of waters now denied to all parties. Engineering, technical and financial assistance in this problem must assume peace and co-operation before men and money can be applied to the development of the Jordan River system as a whole.¹

There is also one further reason which must not be lost sight of. The River Jordan has always had great sentimental and spiritual significance to mankind because of its association with the life of Christ and the Message of Salvation He brought to the world.

Never did it occur to anyone that this Biblical waterway which, since time immemorial, has brought inspiration, comfort and plenty to the people who lived along its banks, would one day become a source of irritation and strife. No one ever dreamed that its peaceful waters—the waters which were blessed by the First Baptism—would bring the spectre of war into the area.

"Diversion of the Jordan River waters," warned His Beatitude Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras on 11 January, 1964, following his historic meeting in Jerusalem with His Holiness Pope Paul VI, "will be a source of grief and sorrow throughout the world. He told newsmen that "Orthodox Christians are gravely concerned over the diversion question and want the River in which Christ was baptized to continue its flow."

It should not only be the Orthodox Eastern Church that should feel concerned over what is happening, but the whole of Christendom must decry the desecration of one of its holiest shrines.

The Arabs—Moslems and Christians—are deeply affected by the Israeli action, not only by reason of the River's religious and historic significance, but also because of the material damage already suffered by the farmers of the Jordan Valley, whose very existence has been jeopardized and the

dangers it presents to general Arab rights and security.

To sum up, Arab opposition to the Israeli Jordan River project rests on three fundamental factors:

1. The land on which the reservoir has been constructed, the territory through which the pipeline passes and the lands in the Negeb it proposes to irrigate, are all or mostly Arab-owned; while parts of the scheme fall outside the territory allotted to the 'Jewish State' under the Partition Resolution and present Israeli occupation is subject to the provisions of the Armistice Agreements.

It should be noted that the U.N. Resolution establishing the state of Israel guaranteed the integrity of Arab rights and property. Section 8 of Chapter 2 distinctly stipulates that "no expropriation of land owned by an Arab in the Jewish State shall be allowed except for public purposes." The Section goes on to prescribe that "in all cases of expropriation full compensation as fixed by the Supreme Court shall be paid previous to dispossession."

The Israelis have neither justly 'expropriated' the land nor offered or paid the Arab owners 'compensation as fixed by the Supreme Court.' They simply seized it.

On the other hand, the Armistice Agreements preclude the parties from acquiring any benefits from the armistice. It is prescribed that "no provision of this Agreement shall in any way prejudice the rights, claims and positions of either Party hereto in the ultimate peaceful settlement of the Palestine question, the provisions of this Agreement being dictated exclusively by military and not by political, considerations."

It will, therefore, be seen that the Israelis are not free to carry out projects of a permanent nature in territory outside the boundaries of the 'Jewish State', as delineated in the Partition Plan and now held under Armistice Agreements. Since Israel's unilateral action does 'prejudice the rights, claims and positions' of the Palestine Arab land-owners and gives the Israelis a military advantage through increased immigration and in other ways, it is in direct violation of the provisions of the Agreements.

2. The main waters of the River Jordan originate in Lebanon and Syria; and beyond the Sea of Galilee, the River forms the boundary between Palestine and Jordan. Its waters have been used from time immemorial to cultivate lands in the Jordan Valley and not beyond. Removal of water from within the Israeli-occupied part of Palestine for irrigation of land not in the immediate vicinity of the river-bed but some 150 miles away, has deprived the Arab cultivators in the Jordan Valley of their sustenance, has increased salinity and with a depleted flow, if not cut off altogether, will dry up the Dead Sea within a period of from 70 to 100 years.

According to Oppenheim, a leading jurist in international law, "the flow of. . . international rivers is not within the arbitrary power of one of the riparian states, for it is a rule of International Law that no state is allowed to alter the natural conditions of its own territory to the disadvantage of the natural conditions of the territory of a neighbouring state. For this reason, a state is not only forbidden to stop or divert the flow of a river which runs from its own to a neighbouring state, but likewise to make such use of the water of the river as either causes danger to the neighbouring state or prevents it from making proper use of the flow of the river on its part."²

3. Israeli sources declare, the River Jordan project is intended to provide space for new Jewish immigrants. The entry of more immigrants into Palestine constitutes a serious threat of permanent displacement of the Palestine Arabs—a situation which can only aggravate the Palestine controversy.

To meet the new Israeli threat, Arab kings and heads of state met thrice in summit conferences to consider the dangerous situation arising out of the Israeli action and the steps to be taken to safeguard Arab rights and interests. Among the measures adopted was a decision to implement recommendations of the League of Arab States to utilize, to Arab advantage, the headwaters of the River Jordan, which originate in Lebanon and Syria. Underlying the Arab Summit decisions were two major considerations:

The *first*, of a positive nature, seeking to benefit the Arab riparians in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan whose right to utilize their own waters, on their own soil, has priority over whatever new claim another party may put forward.

The *second*, negative one, is to deny the Israelis—regarded as an alien and aggressive creation whose alleged title to Palestine is derived from military conquest—the use of Arab waters which would consolidate further their hold over Arab lands in occupied Palestine and increase their potential to undertake new military adventures in neighbouring Arab countries.

The Israelis claimed to be within their rights in diverting the waters of the Jordan within the territory under their control. By the same logic, the Arabs believe that they too have every right to take whatever measures they deem necessary to utilize, for the benefit of Arab lands, the headwaters of the River Jordan which originate in Lebanon and Syria.

The Israelis then threatened that if the headwaters of the River Jordan were tampered with, they will regard this as a provocation and go to war.

Before any action was taken on the Arab side, the Israelis did attack the neighbouring Arab States on 5 June 1967 and did occupy portions of the areas surrounding the headwaters of the River Jordan as to render impossible the carrying out of the intended Arab projects.

In regard to the fear that removal of the waters of the River Jordan might eventually reduce the level of the Dead Sea, then Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir disclosed that "in addition to irrigation, the plan provides at a later stage for the generation of hydro-electric power. This," he explained, "is to be derived from a canal connecting the Mediterranean Sea (near Haifa) with the Dead Sea and utilizing the drop of 390 metres between the two seas to drive the power turbines. This canal", Sapir goes on to say, "would also compensate the Dead Sea for the diversion of the Jordan into the irrigation system." He then points out that "this hydro-electric scheme has already emerged from the stage of theoretical speculation into the more tangible form of engineering calculations and design."

Sapir then explained that the "preliminary studies for the scheme have been prepared for the Water Planning Authority of Israel by Messrs Hayes and Cotton who have wide experience of similar engineering projects in the United States. According to their calculations, the scheme could ultimately

generate 1,500,000,000 Kwh. per year. In their opinion this is an eminently sound practical enterprise both from the engineering and economic points of view. With this abundant and cheap source of power to drive the irrigation pumps and turn the wheels of industry, the country could rapidly advance to a new era of prosperity," it is claimed.³

From a development point of view, the scheme may look innocent, feasible and profitable. But such unilateral action without consideration to what damage may occur to the interests of others, is fraught with grave dangers. It must be noted that once the salt waters of the Mediterranean have done their job of generating electricity for Israel, they will enter Arab lands and Arab territory and destroy what little sweet water remains in the Jordan Valley for use by the Arab farmers on both banks of the River. That the Arab States would be willing to accept this new aggression without taking measures to protect their lands is doubtful.