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By MMZ 12/11/77

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

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*Portions X-3*

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Visit of Israeli  
Prime Minister  
Eshkol.

I. The Prime Minister: Vigorous for his 68 years, Eshkol is a shrewd, patient, negotiator--well-briefed for his Washington talks. His reputation as a compromiser masks a basic strength and toughness. Since succeeding Ben-Gurion last June, he has established himself as a political power. His English is adequate.

II. On this visit, Eshkol wants (but will settle for less than):

1. Purchases of military hardware, principally tanks, as  
--symbol of U.S. support, and  
--means of retaining superiority over Arabs;
2. Financial aid to improve his armed forces;  
(if necessary, we can make development loans)
3. Impress us with seriousness of U.A.R. missile threat;  
(we disagree)
4. Concrete cooperation on nuclear desalinization;  
(we can be forthcoming)
5. A boost to his leadership at home.  
(this is to our interest)

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III. What we want in addition to resolving Israeli desires:

1. To satisfy Eshkol of our continued interest and ability to safeguard Israel against attack;
2. To maintain U.S. influence among the Arabs, ease Arab-Israeli tensions, and promote trends toward accommodations;
3. To prevent stimulation of the Near East arms race by Israeli acquisition of missiles or nuclear weapons.

IV. Recommended Points to Make to Prime Minister:

1. We are committed to safeguard the independence and integrity of Israel. We have the capability to do so and have stated our commitment publicly and privately.

2. Our assessment is that Israel will continue to enjoy its present military superiority over the Arabs for the next several years. Despite exaggerated Israeli claims, for the foreseeable future, the U.A.R. missile capability will remain primarily a psychological threat and the U.A.R. nuclear capability nil. We are concerned about the escalation of the Near East arms race and firmly oppose proliferation of nuclear weapons and missile acquisition by either side. We consider acquisition of missiles, even with conventional warheads, a significant step toward the acquisition of a nuclear capability. We have discussed restraint in this field with both Israel and the U.A.R. and intend to pursue it further. We are not unhopeful of positive results.

3. /

4. |

we are prepared, if necessary, to provide to Israel development loans up to \$10 million in FY-1965 and a similar amount in FY-1966 on the same terms as in 1964, contingent upon no drop in our overall aid appropriation levels.

5. Aware of Israel's acute need for fresh water, we are prepared to cooperate in developing practical processes of desalting. We propose the initiation of joint U.S.-Israeli feasibility studies on the type and size of desalting plants most appropriate for Israel's use. If the studies showed positive results, the U.S. would be prepared to consider helping finance an agreed project.

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First Summary  
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We seek extension of war safeguards to all nuclear facilities in both Israel and the U.A.R., to ease tensions and damp down the arms race.

7. That to allay genuine Arab fears and to facilitate our efforts to moderate pressures in the area, Prime Minister consider making periodic public rebuttals of charges of Israeli expansionist ambitions, and reiterate his determination to continue to work for an Arab-Israel peace despite rebuffs from the other side.

8. Our efforts would be further enhanced by Israeli cooperation on refugee initiatives, on measures to strengthen UWTSO, generally with and within the UN, and on continued quiet implementation of the Jordan water project with minimum publicity.

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V. Summary Considerations:

1. Israel's two basic concerns are
  - long-term security margin over Arabs
  - need for fresh water through desalination
2. Israel seeks tangible U.S. support: arms with aid to cover costs or close military association.
3. Arab fears of Israel's clear military superiority and of suspected aggressive expansionist aims underlie the Arab arms build-up and anti-Israeli propaganda.
4. Arab recognition of U.S. as main bulwark of Israel's long-term security gives special significance to our acts and statements.

5. Arab-Israel confrontation in shaky equilibrium

--Jordan waters diversion seems unlikely to cause large-scale hostilities.

--U.A.R. missile developments are insufficient to provoke pre-emptive Israeli attack.

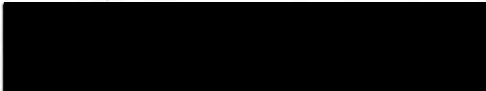
--U.A.R. is in a poor military posture for a major attack.

--Arab relations with the West after some improvements have become uncertain, with flashes of hostility.

--Although Khrushchev visit pointed up common Soviet-U.A.R. policies to reduce Western influence in the Near East, joint communique carefully avoided any statement implying aggression against Israel. Record shows Nasser not tool of Soviet policy.

--Any worsening of Arab-West relations resulting from partisan policy in favor of Israel will damage Israel's interests.

--Western ability to help Israel is in direct ratio to Western influence with the Arabs.

  
Acting Secretary

SECRET

May 22, 1964

PRIME MINISTER ESHKOL OF ISRAEL  
Official Visit, June 1-3, 1964

*Part 3*  
*X-3*

Background Paper

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Present Status of the Arab-Israel Confrontation

An uneasy equilibrium continues to exist in Israel's confrontation with a hostile Arab world. Although friction along the borders is constant, there has been no major military clash since March 1962. The most critical Arab-Israel issue this year, Israel's diversion of Jordan River waters, seems less likely to cause large scale hostilities in the near future, though the possibility of Arab counter-action that could escalate cannot be ruled out entirely. Israel's deep concern about U.A.R. missile development does not seem to be sufficient to prompt it to pre-emptive attack. With one-third of its effective ground forces mired in the Yemen and its new weapons development far from achieved, the U.A.R., Israel's principal military antagonist, is in a poor military posture for a major attack.

While the heat of the Arab-Israel dispute seems likely for a time to remain below the flash point, there are many forces at work that could disturb the existing precarious balance and, more generally, what stability there is in the area as a whole. First and foremost, Arab hostility toward Israel remains unmitigated. No Arab leader or government is prepared to seek accommodation with Israel and threats to destroy Israel remain a staple of Arab political speeches. The U.A.R. lobbied successfully at the Cairo Summit for a policy of containment of Israel rather than the liberation of Palestine.

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### Arab States Internal Stability

Under the shadow cast by the unrelieved Arab-Israel dispute, the Arab states offer a mixed tableau in their internal affairs, relations with one another, and relations with the West. The Arab governments generally have shown improved internal stability during recent months, and in Saudi Arabia, where Crown Prince Faisal has taken effective power, the prospects for stability and needed internal reform are brighter. There are important exceptions to this pattern, however. In Iraq, in spite of an uneasy truce, a final settlement of the Kurdish rebellion is not clear or in sight. In the Yemen, the civil war goes on, though the resumption of U.A.R.-Saudi diplomatic relations and a mutual announcement that neither has designs in Yemen are positive steps in the direction of some kind of a modus vivendi between the two outside powers most directly involved. It is in Syria that problems of internal stability are most acute, and have the most direct bearing on the Arab-Israel dispute. Syria is the most belligerent-minded of Israel's neighbors and the continuance of chronic governmental instability there feeds Israeli fears that an extremist government, newly come to power, might order an irrational military attack, perhaps on Israel's Jordan waters diversion network. It is reassuring to some degree that, in spite of continuing rumblings within Syria, her border troops have apparently been under tight discipline as Israel prepared to take water out of Lake Tiberias, and no serious clashes have occurred.

### Inter-Arab Relations

The solidarity achieved by the Arab nations at the Arab summit conference, resting on a common recognition that military action was not a rational counter to Israel's Jordan waters diversion plans, has remained reasonably intact. The one important exception is Syria, which has



become the target of violent U.A.R. and Iraqi propoganda attacks (and according to the Syrians, subversion) during recent weeks. Both governments obviously think the time propitious to try for a more sympathetic and malleable regime in Damascus. Such a regime, in the short run at least, by being more closely tied to U.A.R. policy, would at least be a less erratic and unpredictable neighbor for Israel.

#### The Arabs and the West

Israel, looking out at the Arab countries about it, must consider not only their internal situations and relations with one another, but also their relations with the rest of the world and, most particularly, with the West. Generally viewed, the Arabs' relations with the West, slowly but perceptibly improving in the recent past, seem now to have entered into a period of uncertainty and, in some facets, hostility. The British have stiffened against what they view as Nasser's challenge to their control in the southern Arabian peninsula and the Yemen border war is assuming more substantial proportions. Libya, on the threshold of a new era of financial independence and urged on by the U.A.R., is seeking to terminate the British and U.S. military presence there. And finally, the West's refusal to take issue with Israel's diversion of the Jordan again highlights, this time in terms of an issue all Arabs can understand ("theft" of Arab water), the West's continuing support of Israel.

#### Israel and the West: Implications for U.S. Policy

The Arab reaction amid portents of a more general change in the climate of Arab-West relations has been one of both militancy (the southern Arabian peninsula) and moderation (the Arab Summit decision that there would be no military riposte to Israel's Jordan waters diversion). Recent events, however, are read by Israel through its own particular prism. It claims to see in them further symptoms of an Arab hostility as unrelenting toward the West as it is toward Israel. It points to the West's community of interest with Israel and asks that this be