

BASIC PRINCIPLE ACCEPTED ON JORDAN  
WATERS, JOHNSTON REPORTS..

WASHINGTON, JULY 6 - (USIS) - Presidential envoy Eric Johnston reported today that the countries directly concerned have accepted the principle that the waters of the River Jordan be internationally shared for the benefit of all.

This was reviewed in a State Department press release following a call today by Johnston on President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles.

Johnston has just returned from his second visit to the Near East to discuss Jordan water development proposals.

Text of the State Department press release follows:-

"Ambassador Eric Johnston has informed the President and the Secretary of State that Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel have accepted the principle of international sharing of the contested waters of the Jordan River and are prepared to cooperate with the U.S. Government in working out details of a mutually acceptable program for developing the irrigation and power potential of the river system.

"On his return from a four-week visit to the area for discussion with Arab and Israeli representatives, Mr. Johnston said that the attitudes of the interested states clearly indicated a desire to evolve a workable plan for economic development of the Jordan Valley, despite the difficult political issues outstanding between Israel and the Arab countries. Progress made during the negotiations just concluded has encouraged him to believe that an early understanding on all aspects of such a plan is now a possibility. Mr. Johnston stated that the plan involved acceptance by the Arab countries and Israel of the following principles:-

"1 - The limited waters of the Jordan river system should be shared equitably by the four states in which they rise and flow. This principle was implicit in the valley plan put forward respectively by the Arab States and Israel, both of which clearly recognize the right of the other states to a share of the available water. It was affirmed by both states during the recent conversations with Mr. Johnston.

"2 - A neutral impartial authority should be created to supervise withdrawals of water from the river system in accordance with the division ultimately accepted by all parties. The precise nature of such an authority remains to be determined.

"3 - Amelioration of the condition of the Arab refugees from Palestine should be a principal objective of the irrigation program for the Jordan Valley.

"4 - Broad lines of understanding as to the total program should be reached at the earliest possible time, not only in the interest of the refugees but in the interest of economic progress and stability in the area.

"5 - Storage of irrigation waters for the valley in Lake Tiberias (Sea of Galilee) will be considered open-mindedly by all parties, when progress in developing the valley indicates the necessity of using the Lake as a principal reservoir.

"Mr. Johnston made it clear that while the foregoing principles form a solid basis for further negotiations, there remain a number of specific points on which differences must be reconciled before the valley project can be realized..

(more)

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"Ambassador Johnston's mission in the Near East began last October when the President asked him to lay before the Governments of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel a report on unified development of the Jordan Valley prepared by an American engineering firm at the request of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. On his first visit to the area, the states concerned agreed to consider the suggestions contained in the UNRWA report. The Arab countries later submitted a plan for the valley's development and Israel also put forward a plan to Mr. Johnston. These three plans formed the basis of the recent discussions."

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