

There are many things that must be done.

We shall discuss the River Jordan and probably confine our discussions in general to the River Jordan, the watershed of the Jordan. But I want to assure you that we in the U.S. are interested in other programs for the economic development of the area; and we want you, as the men of courage and vision who have carved out this nation, to join us in assisting the economic development of the area.

The second thing we feel is essential is that if we are going to achieve the full growth and prosperity the area is capable of, that further integration in the area is essential, and that means that men of your courage and vision must take that leadership in integration. It is not an easy thing to do. It requires statesmanship of the highest calibre and it entails sometimes denying yourselves things you feel you are entitled to have. It requires doing the things which sometimes you think are not expedient for the moment - these are always the responsibilities of leadership, responsibilities which we in the U.S. are beginning to find out in our struggles to maintain the balance of world power. There are many men who would like to throw away these responsibilities, but we cannot do it. It seems to me that you in this area must also accept the responsibility of leadership with all it entails, and we trust you will approach the whole problem from that point of view.

In the development of this strategic river - the Jordan - and its tributaries, we are coming out here with these three plans:

- (1) We presented to you last fall a plan which for brevity we will call "The Unified Plan".

We told you at that time that it was not the plan, it was a plan for the development of this area, subject to modification and change if the engineering data proved that it should be modified or changed.

- (2) The second is the so-called "Cotton Report" made by an eminent engineer with the cooperation of another eminent engineer Mr. Hays.
- (3) And the third is the Arab Plan which we have been discussing in detail with the four Arab States - Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, - during the last six days prior to coming here.

The difficulty with considering the Cotton plan as far as we are concerned, is that it takes into consideration a resource not within the country of the Jordan or its watershed. I am sure that the Unified Plan would have been a different plan had it taken into consideration the River Litani in the Lebanon, but we have consistently stated, and we still maintain, that the Litani is a stream wholly within Lebanon - it is a national asset of Lebanon. We can no more require that it be given up for the benefit of Jordan than we can require that you give up the Yarmuk Jordan triangle. We have persistently and consistently refused to do so even under strong pressure of the Arabs. Therefore we cannot consider the inclusion of the Litani River in development of the Jordan Valley. It is a river completely outside the states involved, completely a national asset of one State, The only way that that river can be attained for the use and benefit of the region is by persuading Lebanon that it should be included within the area. And it seems to us that that matter rests almost entirely within your hands by the action and attitudes that you take in this matter and that you evidence in the next few days round this table.

In considering the three plans, we must exclude the Litani from consideration.

We come back to the program which we presented to you last fall as perhaps being the only one that does embody the wants and desires - also taking into consideration political difficulties involved - of the four states that are included in the Jordan watershed.

There are, perhaps, five features in this:

First is the division of the waters. We think that the division as outlined in the Unified Plan is probably a fair division, all things taken into consideration. And we would urge you to adopt approximately the amount of waters indicated in the Unified Plan, namely, approximately 400,000,000 cubic metres annually.

The second is the question of what is done with that water. We have consistently stated last fall here, and publicly in America, that we thought that once that water was allocated to a nation, it was up to that nation to do or use the water as she saw fit, and we have consistently stated that if a certain amount of water was allocated to Israel, she could take that water to the coastal plain. I must confess to you that this was a very serious stumbling block as far as the Arab States are concerned. They have persisted in contending that the water must be used within that watershed. We still adhere to the principle that once the water is allocated it can be taken away should the nation desire to do so.

The third question is one of storage of the water. We feel that the program outlined in the Unified Plan is perhaps the best for storage, but that the question of some kind of international authority should be taken into consideration. We feel that when once a division has been made of the water, and when once a general determination has been made as to what should be done in the area, then there should be some type of international authority in control over the allocation and use of the waters.

And lastly we think that there must be access to the Yarmuk-Jordan triangle for surveys. We have not been permitted to do that, and we think that engineers should be allowed to make an accurate survey in the area. We will discuss that in more detail later.

The fifth point is that we should like to start as soon as possible so that the waters of the Yarmuk and the Jordan and its tributaries do not continue to run waste into the Dead Sea. They have been wasted for too many years. Therefore we should like to start at the earliest possible opportunity, which we think can be very soon, if we can reach general agreement while we are here. Therefore, we would like to ask you what suggestions you have for modifications of the Unified Plan. What suggestions do you wish to offer to change the things we have suggested to you.

And in conclusion I would like to say this to you, and I say this with the utmost sincerity - that we are living in an entirely different world than we used to: a world in which science and invention has given us tools that men never dreamed of before. I will not attempt to go into an analysis of those tools, but I can say to you that within the next decade you will see greater changes in the face of the globe than within fifty years' period. These tools are here for us to use, to bring fulfilment to that age-long desire for improvement. We in the U.S. are interested in that because we feel that you cannot preserve freedom and enlarge freedom unless you can enable man to improve his economic status as well. And that is true not only in this region but also in all regions of the earth. That is the reason that we persistently pursued a course to enable people to help themselves towards a greater fulfilment and enlargement of the things which nature has given to man. I think there never was a time in history when a people such as you with the courage and vision that you have, were given the opportunity of taking the leadership such as you have in Israel. I hope that in all of our discussions we can raise our sights to the new horizons of tomorrow and not be interested in things of the past - there are these opportunities for us, there is this chance of leadership. We want to be partners with you in assisting you to achieve that leadership in any way which we can. But you also must do your share of that work.

And so I hope that in these discussions you will bring up the lugubrious worlds of philosophies... (?) in hope and confidence and good cheer. I think the whole world is watching us in what we do here to-day. I know that your friends are watching you in America. I know that all the people of the U.S. are watching us and what we do here. There are people in the world who feel that they can only decide their issues by force. We meeting round this table are attempting to dissolve these issues by understanding and reasoning - a new element in the world to-day,

And so I can say that in a sense you have a historic task which you can mould and form and direct for activities in time to come.

I hope that in that spirit we will tackle the problems that have confronted us to-day. I hope that we will raise ourselves and try to achieve an understanding which can be to the benefit not only of the people of this region but of the people of the world as well.

Mr. Sharett:

Thank you very much, Mr. Johnston, for your most interesting, stimulating, and may I say, inspiring statement. You were good enough to refer to the necessity for partnership between the U.S.A. and ourselves. By that you paid us a very high compliment, by putting us, as it were, on a footing of equality with the world's greatest power that has ever arisen. Of course there is a striking disparity between the two partners, in size, wealth, power and capacity.

Mr. Johnston:

But not in spirit.

Mr. Sharett:

I should like to add another basic disparity between us. You come from afar. People in Washington consider themselves as

they try to seek out and locate centres of potential difficulty and trouble and search their hearts to try and find in what manner they can be of help in resolving those difficulties, in leading the entire world into ways of peaceful collaboration. Now we are one of the objects of this constructive attention. But what is merely one of the problems that beset the world - and not one of the most important and most urgent ones (I am not belittling the importance and urgency, yet there is a certain order of priority) - what is to you just one item and not a very high one on the world agenda is to us our whole life, our whole existence, our whole future. Therefore we cannot afford to bring that kind of detachment to bear upon the examination and solution of the problem which it is your privilege to do.

The problem which is the subject of our discussion is the very essence of our life. Again, you have paid us a very high compliment, a tribute in fact, by inviting us to assume a position of leadership in the area. We are not rejecting the idea by any means, but long before we can aspire in any practical sense to that exalted position we have to assume something that is much more tangible and more compelling in its urgency, - and that is our survival. We have to ensure our survival against the very heavy odds with which we are grappling, in the face of the pressure upon us of the contries by which we are surrounded, a pressure which is to this day inexorably hostile. We are hemmed in here, by decree of providence, within this narrow strip of land on the eastern shore of the Mediteranean not so richly endowed with national wealth. A good part of it is arid, some of it permanently so. There is not much mineral wealth. We have found something and we are still probing the mysteries of our geology to find a little more. We are naturally trying our very best in the direction of developing our industries. But our most fundamental problem is how best to utilise the extremely limited soil resources of the

We can only do it by irrigating as large a proportion of the fertile area as possible. This has been the main theme of our effort since its very inception. Irrigation has been the very passion of our work, the very soul of it. You could depict the entire progress of our work in this country in terms of discoveries of water and of methods devised in putting the water to rational use.

Now you have that little river called the Jordan, which is part of our ancient history, and which is one of the historic and geographical symbols of our country. You know what kind of stream it is, very limited. Every drop of its water is precious, every drop of it is part of our future. We realise that geography has so ordained it that that stream cuts through, in its further course, another country. That creates certain rights for that country. On the other hand, the main tributary of the river Jordan, the Yarmuk, forms our boundary for a certain distance, which gives us, too, certain rights. We cannot be blamed for trying to make the most of those rights and for making the most of our geographical position, which luckily has placed us in control of a certain portion of that stream, which we need, not for bargaining purposes, not in order to sell something to others and get rich as a result, but in order to make our life possible.

I am not an expert either on land or on water - figures will be supplied by my friends when the appropriate stage has been reached. Our population even today is far from being self-supporting, either in the physical or in the financial sense. This population will grow, and it will have to grow without bursting the country's boundaries. That is our determination, all the talk to the contrary notwithstanding. We don't know yet what the future holds in store for this country or for our people, scattered as it is in lands near and far. Things that may happen any day in certain countries of North Africa may completely transform the position here. We consider those people as living on the brink of a volcano. One day may come, I very much fear that the day will come,

country will be to them their only salvation. It is one of the inestimable sources of moral and material strength to us that there is a Jewry in the U.S.A., numerous, wealthy, enjoying full freedom and equality of rights ~~and we feel~~ confident that they will continue in that position - but that is not the good fortune of many other Jewish communities. Without drawing an unnecessarily dark picture of the situation and the prospects, we have been taught by bitter experience to expect and to be ready for the worst. That is a problem which always preys on our minds.

But even with the population that we have at present, we must cultivate and irrigate a lot more than we do today, to enable us to feel more balanced in our economic life and not expose ourselves to the danger of being starved out in a crisis.

The concept of regional planning, of regional development, is by no means alien to us. It is true that in considering regional possibilities for development we have to look a little farther afield and not condition our minds solely by the set of circumstances that exist today, - with all the strife and antagonism and narrow-minded prejudice which is prevalent today. But if we are to be true to the essence of a regional plan we have to consider the region as one unit. Just as we would never agree to be limited with regard to the use of our water, whether within or outside the basin, but shall insist that whatever water we have we must be free to use wherever it be most advantageous, so in considering the region we do not feel that we ^{can be} called upon to limit ourselves to any single river or system of rivers. If the planning is to be regional in the true sense of the term, then the region as a whole, with its land and water resources, must be encompassed. We had to join issue with you a few months ago on this particular point, concerning the part which we firmly believe the Litani river is destined to

force us to adopt this plan or that. You can only use your influence in trying to make all concerned adopt a certain regional scheme, also lend your expert assistance to help work out the project and assist in its execution in terms of financing.

But the plan as such should be truly regional. If, then, we pose the problem of regional planning and seek a plan which we should all strive to carry out, it is unthinkable to us that the Litani should be excluded. You cripple the chances of development in this whole area by taking it out. It is a national river, as you just said. But there are resources which are purely national and yet you include them in your so-called unified plan, e.g. springs in the Huleh area, various sources and rivulets in the Jordan valley, which you take into account. It is adjacent to us. The bend of the Litani is only a few kilometres away from our frontier. Moreover, the Lebanon is included in the unified plan both as a beneficiary and as a contributor.

I understand that your meeting in Cairo took place, for all practical purposes, under the auspices of the Arab League, judging from the enumeration of the countries you gave us. We also know that the plan which you call the Arab plan was prepared by a group of engineers invited by the Arab League to work out a project. We know that the Arab League has always maintained that it is not merely a political instrument, but also an instrument for development, although they have done little to carry out that part of their program. But there is certainly a plank in their platform to that purpose. Therefore, why should it be repugnant to the Arab League that an Arab country more richly endowed with water should give up a part of the surplus for the benefit of an Arab country less richly endowed? Actually, it is not giving us anything, it is merely allowing less water to run to waste into the Mediterranean. What I want to say is that if it is not today a matter of practical politics that the Lebanon should provide water for irrigation in Israel, why should

wasted for the benefit of the Jordan Kingdom? We shall be pleased to let that water flow through our territory.

To us, of all the plans so far drawn up, the only plan that deserves the title of a regional plan is the Cotton plan. We don't say it is ideal - nothing is ideal in life - and we assume that it can be improved upon. But the non-adoption of that plan today does not in itself dispose of the question of the Litani. I repeat that if it is not considered a matter of practical politics that the Lebanon should present Israel with a hundred million cubic metres of water per year, while Israel is called upon to provide a hundred million cubic metres for the benefit of the Jordan Kingdom, water which Israel so badly needs and which it can demonstrably use with such great advantage to itself and the region, why should not Lebanon be invited to supply that volume of water for the benefit of Jordan, as a matter of inter-State assistance within the Arab world? I do not think that we can be blamed for resisting the giving up, for the benefit of Jordan, of water which we desperately need and which we can so effectively use, at least to the same extent that Lebanon is resisting an attempt to deny it the luxury of allowing the Litani water to run to waste.

Mr. Johnston: (interrupting Mr. Sharett)

I would like to say that even under the Cotton plan, the use of the Litani is years away. The plan would take years and years to carry out, and time is on your side. We are not denying you those waters.

Mr. Sharett:

I was coming to the element of time. I was considering the problem in its global framework, from the viewpoint of principles of planning. Now I take up the point which you have just made - and which I cannot but accept as fully valid. That being so, let us not remove that possibility from our horizon, let us not now substitute something which is not a regional plan for something which is a regional plan. The unified plan, as you call it, apart from its very serious organic drawbacks, is not, to our mind, a regional plan deserving that name. Therefore let us not now crystallise our thinking and adopt any scheme which would entail a final allocation of the entire water resources available at present, because in any case it will take years to implement such an allocation. Why should we commit ourselves now to any system of final, total distribution? After all, progress cannot but be gradual and piecemeal, and there may be a possibility of making headway with schemes which are practical without prejudicing the future. Let us hope that when the time comes to dispose of the yet unallocated balances, which may have grown by that time - perhaps the climate of the region will have changed, politically and economically - a wider distribution will be made possible.

As to the Cotton plan, you know what its main advantages are to us: the volume of water is nearly twice as large; the irrigated area is three times as large; the area within Israel is about $4\frac{1}{2}$ times as large; the power capacity is seven times as large; and the water left to the Arab states concerned is fully adequate to irrigate all their irrigable land, so that the quantity of water allocated to Israel represents an unusable surplus.

Maybe within a few years this will look more attainable than it does today. So let us not mortgage the future but tackle what is immediately feasible. I believe that this kind of approach lacks nothing in constructiveness; at the same time it takes full care of the defence of our interests, which are not

interests of self-aggrandisement, not of trying to subject others, but are the very legitimate interests of survival in most difficult circumstances and against overwhelming odds.

Let us repeat. If a regional scheme is to be discussed at all, then the Cotton scheme is the one regional scheme which makes sense to us. But we do not think the discussion need be compressed within the framework of a regional scheme. Any project can be examined.

Mr. Johnston:

You have given us an excellent exposition of your point of view. But this is not the time to discuss this question of allocation. I simply want to say that we are discussing the development of the Jordan valley. I think our views are quite close and, as I said, time is on your side. But time might develop friendship in the area, if you could integrate yourself in this area. In the immediate future you will have all the water you can possibly use available from the Jordan. We want to discuss this with you, because the Jordan is an international stream running through four countries, and because it is an international stream, any construction carried out without taking account of the water rights on the river, would only lead to more tension and more conflict. Therefore we want to settle the question at least territorially. The technical questions should be settled by engineers. I do not feel I can discuss them in any intelligent way. But we want to get started on this work. With a greater degree of understanding I think we are not far apart from each other. It seems something can be done immediately for the benefit of Israel.

Now about the Arab League meeting in Cairo: As far as I know it was not an Arab League meeting. I want to tell you about the position of the Arab States: The leadership of Egypt has been extremely helpful. Without that leadership we would not have made the progress in our talks which we did make. You will recall that when we met last, at least two of the Arab States had told us that they would have nothing to do with any area program which would give Israel a drop of water. Now this attitude has changed, it is now a more constructive attitude. You ought to grab hold of it. I repeat, it was not an Arab League meeting but a meeting under the leadership of Egypt and very beneficial. An effort was made to solve this very difficult problem of the Jordan River, it is a most difficult one and it should be solved immediately.

Mr. Sharett:

I said I was not going to quote figures, but just on one point. According to the Main plan the allocation to Jordan is 774 million ccm.; according to the Cotton plan it is 575. Supposing Jordan really needs the 774, it is of course highly questionable whether Jordan can really make beneficial use of that volume of water. But let us assume it can. Then it falls short of its requirements by 200 million ccm. Why should it claim them from Israel when it ^{can} get them from Lebanon, an Arab State? The Lebanon is not using the water, but wasting it. Israel undeniably can use every drop of it to the greatest advantage to herself and the human race. It is a grossly irrational proposition to take that water away from us. Had there been no alternative, the situation would be different. But there is. The water is available, but it runs into the Mediterranean, just as the Jordan water is wasted in the Dead Sea. Is it so beyond any possibility to make Lebanon see sense? Cannot Egypt understand that kind of language?

Mr. Johnston:

What should happen to the Litani is a long way off; it is not something to be solved tomorrow, although you have almost given that impression. It is a long, long process, years away. We must not expect to solve all the problems at once, but step by step. You should take the first step.

As to the amount of water, I shall leave that to the engineers to decide. All these are engineering problems.

The hard part is to take the first step. The first
The second step....

Mr. Sharett:

Provided the first and second steps do not in advance wreck the chances of the third and fourth.

Mr. Johnston:

Lebanon also has ideas as to how she wants to use that water. Under the Point 4 program we had engineers there. I think it would be no good to tell Lebanon what to do with her own water. She should know what she can do.

We might say, too, that because the Negev didn't have a sufficient population, Israel should give it up?

Mr. Sharett:

If a premium is to be placed on Lebanese intransigence, we should not be made to pay the penalty.

Mr. Johnston:

We are ^{not} precluding you from anything. We are only assisting in the development of the Jordan region; in starting cooperation.

Mr. Sharett:

But is this really necessary?

Mr. Johnston:

Really I think we are discussing something lying years ahead when we should be discussing something which could be done right now. That is what we want to discuss. It is a very difficult problem.

There is also the problem of the Arab refugees. We think that is a problem which you should help us in. It is a matter of public opinion. It is held out as a political threat. Whether it should be is another matter.

Something has to be done. We can get going on this immediately.

Mr. Sharett:

May I remind you - or perhaps you may not have been involved in this matter at the time - that when we first heard that a Yarmuk river scheme was being discussed we did not raise a cry of "No" or "Never". We simply called attention to the fact that with regard to the Yarmuk river we have water usage rights,

riparian rights, concession rights, and if there is a plan for the use of this river we should like to have a look at it. With the main object of the plan we have the fullest sympathy, and if we find that our rights are protected we shall give it our blessing. If not, we will have to see how the conflicting claims can be reconciled.

Subsequently we heard that that particular scheme had been shelved. Then it reappeared in a new context. That was our initial approach to the problem and that is our approach today.

After a recess,

Mr. Sharett:

I should like to raise a few questions and make a few suggestions, if I may refer to the basic premises of our meeting here, you were kind enough, Mr. Johnston, to refer to the eminently constructive, I might say historic part which American sympathy and support have played, and are still playing, in our fortunes, as well as to the fact that the U.S.A. is vitally interested in helping us solve our problems. We should be very much interested to have a weighty opinion, in the context of the present discussions, as to what should be our conception of solving the problem of the livelihood of a population of two million people. We are today 1,650,000, but in our planning, if it is to be of any real worth - one always ^{has} to allow for a margin of growth in the population, even if we disregard cataclysmic occurrences such as may completely transform the position as regards immigration - we have now to think of a population of a minimum of two million. The problem is that this population should not always subsist on subventions from abroad, but should take full advantage of the subventions now being received in order to develop and fructify latent resources with a view to achieving solvency and economic stability within a certain limited period of time. The country's agricultural, industrial and commercial resources must be developed to the fullest possible extent. We have done a lot of thinking on that subject. We have the problem of how our relations with our neighbours will shape up, but they are secondary. If we do not hold our own, the problem of our relations with our neighbours does not arise. We have done a lot of thinking, we have our views, as to how our agriculture should look, to what uses we should put our water, etc. Perhaps I am taking you back a little now, that perhaps should have been the starting point of this discussion. It is a question of evaluating our needs and possibilities and in the light of such examination determining whether we can or cannot afford to give up water beyond a certain limit. That is one idea which I should like to leave with you and I would welcome your reaction.

The next point I should like to raise is directly concerned with the present stage of your mission. You come to us now from Cairo, where, you have said, you have spent six days meeting and arguing with representatives of four Arab states. We are wondering as to what stage you have reached in

present attitude to regional water development in which Israel is to play its full part. It would help us a great deal if we could be informed that they are making some headway towards cooperation with us - or that they still are as they have been hitherto, as intransigent as their public statements make them appear to be.

Related to that is the question of the so-called Arab plan. Our planning has in the last few years been done with the fullest publicity, including the data upon which we base ourselves. The last of all these plans, the Cotton plan, has been widely publicised. A full summary was published; we withheld no essential figures. On the other hand, the Arab plan is still shrouded in mystery. We saw some brief and inadequate references to it in the press. We have not seen a full summary of the plan, only some haphazard figures which did not make us feel that it was reliable to draw upon them. If it is possible for you - you being unwittingly a mediator between the two parties, arriving here after discussions with them - to tell us exactly what the nature of the Arab plan is, it would be of great interest to us.

Lastly, with reference to the Litani river. Seeing that the American Government realises the importance, or, may I say, the objective justification of utilising the waters of the Litani; assuming on the other hand that this is not a matter of practical politics for tomorrow or the day after, but that nevertheless it is something well worth speeding up, and that some measure of persuasion could be usefully invested to bring the Lebanon to the position of seeing that today they are the dog in the manger; would the American Government be ready to use its good offices with the Lebanese Government in order to instill better reason into their counsels? Putting it point blank, would you be ready to try your exceptionally effective persuasive powers on behalf of that idea by going from here to Beirut and addressing yourself to the Lebanese Government?

In the meantime, can we assume that no scheme which we shall be discussing should be one which will not militate against the chances of including the Litani at a later stage, that sooner or later, one day that powerful source will be joined to the project and that nothing should stand in the way of that being done, and that there should be nothing in the American water plan which should preclude possibility.

Mr. Johnston:

We met in Cairo with representatives of four Arab States. I am perfectly willing to tell you anything we know about the Arab plan or anything else. I must say that the Arab were not familiar with the Cotton plan, they did not even know about it, at least they said, did not know. Therefore this did not come up for discussion. /they

Now the Arab situation: Egypt used her good offices. She is not a member of this region or affected by the Jordan or other streams we are discussing. Egypt's good offices were extremely beneficial when we were attempting to change what has been an intransigent Arab point of view. The Arabs presented a plan which differs from the unified programme in some respects, principally in that it gives much less water to Israel than the unified programme and that they insist that the water must be used within the basin and not be taken outside

I think that after six days of discussion there is a fair chance of getting the Arabs to accept the unified programme with certain relatively minor corrections. It would be leaving Israel with approximately the amount of water mentioned in the Main proposal. There was one point on which we could not get the Arabs to agree although we used all possible persuasion: They insisted that the water must be used within the basin. They were prepared, however, to give a larger contribution to Israel than originally.

Mr. Sharrett:

What is the point behind it ?

Mr. Johnston:

There are several points behind it. One of the reasons is that if the water is used only within the basin, the water going to the Galilee hills will eventually flow back to Arab territory. That is one of the main reasons. In my opinion they did not alter our basic concept. We insist that any nation can use the water as it sees fit.

They have severe political problems which one should not underestimate. If we could reach some kind of an agreement here as to the general principles, we would try to sell the Arabs the idea of using the water outside the basin. But I cannot, of course, guarantee that they will agree. We were unable to succeed in this in our latest effort.

The meetings were held under more favourable auspices and circumstances than I thought possible. The treatment which I received last fall was so different from what I received this time. It was like night and day. I don't know how long this attitude will last, but it is a God-given offer to you. You should assume leadership in the area; with your intelligence and courage you are entitled to it. There are always times when opportunities are not grasped. This opportunity will not recur. I urge you to give serious consideration to the change in the Arab position. I also urge you to consider the US attitude on such a change in the position of the Arab world and the effect it would have if Israel would find it possible to consider this.

We also had some serious acrimonious arguments, but there was a willingness to compromise which is one of the most encouraging features of my meetings in this area, which we hope we will not lose and will not be destroyed by any action you might take. I am sure that this is also what you want.

It is the attitude of the US Government that we cannot and will not at this time take any position regarding the Litani. You also have your political problems here, we recognise that. In my opinion to press further now would simply destroy everything we were able to achieve. We achieved generally far more than I would have thought possible. We do not want to destroy that by insisting on something which we really do not control. You must recognise this as we do. Now there is the best opportunity to take this matter easily, step by step. I do not ask what the house will look like in 30 years from now, it has to be built from the foundation. In 30 years it will look different, that depends on the occupants.

Now I would like to answer your last question: It is a firm commitment of American foreign policy that Israel is a sovereign state. We want Israel to progress. This has been our attitude during the last 6 or 7 years. But we want to see progress. The American taxpayer is heavily overloaded - there

is nothing I need add to that. You can understand that 60 million dollars spent since the second World War is a lot of money. The House, both the Democrats and the Republicans, and the Foreign Relations Committee, last week decided not to give further aid to nations not ratifying the EDC. The people of the USA are not becoming isolationists, they do want to help other people. But at the same time, I think, they do not want to continue unless they begin to see the beginning of a solution to the problems. We believe in Israel, and we are closely tied and attached to her in every form and respect. I have not made a study of the number of people who live in Israel - that is your job as a national state. I know that your economic basis is agriculture and to get a sound agriculture is, for Israel, essential. For that you need more water and you need it quickly, at the earliest possible opportunity. We want to help you to get it. We also feel that your best chance of prosperity, to absorb other people if you wish, and to raise the standard of living would be to become a workshop of this area. Although we believe in agriculture, we wish to point out the necessity for new industrial initiative, by yourselves, in this area. There are many nations in the world which do not grow sufficient food for their own requirements, but they manufacture and they are prosperous nations. I think you also can feed yourselves well by your agriculture, but we want to help you to higher prosperity in industrialisation and to integration in the area. But we must begin step by step.

I repeat: We are not interested just to develop the Jordan Valley. We are ready to discuss any other programme for development. When I was here last, we discussed the transmission of power from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea. It is in the Cotton Plan. We are perfectly willing to discuss any scheme that will give you a greater amount of power. But the initiative for discussion must come from you to us and not the other way round. We look sympathetically on your economy. If we were able to get quick results in the use of the Jordan water, we would want you to help us.

I hope I have answered your questions. I have given all the details I could. The USA will assist people desiring help. If there are any chances to help at this time, we desire to discuss with you any problem you wish.

Mr. SHarett:

Did you sense any change in the attitude of the Arab States as to their being ready to sit down and talk with us?

Mr. Johnston:

I found no such change, no such readiness; but the important change we want you to see is that the Arabs recognise Israel as a state entitled to a share of the water in the region and they are willing to give it to you. They will give you less water than the unified plan, but they recognise that you are entitled to it. There was no point made about cooperation with Israel. The point was raised by them, but not discussed. I feel that there is a chance more than there is no chance for direct negotiation. However, this change has come in the last few months, and with a little encouragement given them, there is no reason why we should not expect a change in the Arab attitude.

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That would be the greatest thing you could accomplish. To me, the most important fact in the whole area is your will to get along with your neighbours, far more important than anything we are discussing to-day. In my opinion that is the most important thing that can be done. Here is a budding flower which needs attention. I hope you will not destroy it - it can easily be destroyed.

Mr. Eshkol:

What is our plan? It is to establish a nation of two million in five years.

We have to start with the soil, and must irrigate the soil, which will mean for us not only food, but also cotton, flax, material for industry, etc.

The minimum that we must reckon on is an irrigable dunam per person. We have irrigated till to-day some 700,000 dunams, and we are perhaps on the verge of exhaustion of the well waters. It is simply impossible for us, with the best of intentions, to think of these greater plans, and not to think of the basic thing - how shall we survive? This is the first question confronting a man, a community or a nation. It is all very well to discuss problems of the entire world or of the neighbours next door. But the first thing is what is the minimum, the last minimum, beyond which there is no possibility to dispute. You, having helped establish the State of Israel, and having helped us for the last years, must ask yourselves the question we are asking ourselves. We might try, for the sake of good neighbourly relations, to make a fine face with the Arab world, but in the meantime we may starve. It is very simple - starve in the simple meaning of the world. You people here have been working with us, and know very well how the balance sheet stands, what is our income, and what we still lack. And in spite of the very fine complimentary words about our economic achievements, you know very well that we are very far from the mark. At the best we can hope to settle 20% or 25% in agriculture. 75% of the population will still occupy itself in commerce and industry. I understand that this is really the basic question for you and for us.

Suppose we should like to make a gesture and say "Let us give the Arabs the water and remain with 300,000,000 c.m." What will be in five years time? How shall we survive? That is what you should ask us. If the Jordan would carry, instead of 6 or 700,000,000 c.m. of water, 3 or 4 billions, the answer would be much easier. Even if the Jordan would carry 2 billion c.m. of water, for the sake of peace and good neighbourly relations we would allow to Transjordan so much. But when you deal with a position where this is the first and last piece of bread for this nation, the position is necessarily different.

Mr. Johnston:

Mr. Minister, you have made a very eloquent presentation. Even under the Cotton plan you could not get this water in five years. The Cotton Plan talks of 15 years to 30 years. I want to ask you a very practical question which you have got to answer, if not here then down in your hearts. How are you going to get the water of the Litani?

Mr. Eshkol:

If not the Litani, then the water of the Jordan.

Mr. Johnston:

I say the best chances of your getting this water is to use the water that is available now, and use it immediately. The Litani is a proposition for the future - not immediately. I think you ought to consider that. If you took all the water of the Jordan - which you are not going to get without great difficulties - including the water in the Yarmuk, you still would not get anywhere near the Cotton Plan, nothing near like what you propose in the Cotton Plan. If you want to get some water of the Litani you have got, in my opinion, to work for it. We are willing to help you work for it. We cannot tell you that we shall include the Litani - it is an individual nation stream, and the feeling at this time would absolutely preclude anything of the kind

Mr. Sharatt:

If the Jordan Kingdom realises that they cannot get water from the Jordan because it belongs to Israel and their attention is drawn to the fact that there is a river which is being wasted, that they could get a fraction of the waters of that river, perhaps pressure on your part would achieve something in that direction.

We are not ready to be a partner to any final allocation of water to-day without the Litani being included. We say there may be no virtue at all in a final allocation. Why should we decree our fate as of to-day?

To that we cannot be a party. Nor do we think it is necessary. We do not think we should start crossing that bridge. We think it unfair. It limits our development quite unduly. If there is to be a final allocation, then with the Litani; if without the Litani, then no final allocation.

Mr. Johnston:

As I understand your position, you do not want to make the final disposition of the waters in the region unless the Litani is included, as in the Cotton Plan. When I discuss with you the allocation of the waters of the Jordan watershed, it is not necessarily a final allocation. That depends on engineering reports and suggestions which, frankly, may take several months or a year to determine. We do not know the soil conditions in the area, we do not know what kind of crops are going to be grown or what the rotation is going to be, the stability of some of these soils. These things have to be determined. What we meant was that the waters of the valley watershed - as the Main Report distinctly stated - be allocated amongst the nations on the basis of the economic use within the watershed.

Mr. Eytan:

It is not completely clear to me what is the source and origin of what I feel is the somewhat rigid position, not even to entertain at this stage the thought of getting the Litani into the plan in any shape or form. I understand the difficulties, and I can understand those difficulties would have to be attested, and if that attesting was effectively made and seen absolutely clearly, no kind of argument could avail. If the arguments were explained and carried conviction, I would see that the position was what it was, and I would not get the impression of sheer rigidity about the position of the U.S. Government that the Litani shall not be included at this stage.

Mr. Johnston:

What I said was that we should not insist on .

Mr. Eytan:

I did not understand from you what kind of effort, if any, had been made to try and persuade the Lebanese that it should be included. You mentioned that the Arab States were unalterably opposed to its inclusion, which created the impression that it had been discussed with the Arab States. At another point you said that the Lebanon is a sovereign state and a sovereign state can decide as it liked in a manner which falls within its sovereign consideration. It seems to me there is a difference between the Arab States collectively on the one hand, and the Lebanon on the other. And this one thing I wondered if you would be prepared to question about. I gathered the impression that the U.S. had spoken to the Arab States collectively about this, but had perhaps not spoken to the Lebanon singly about it. You, the U.S., are interested in seeing progress and development in this part of the World. You are interested in it objectively, also because you have an interest in the region. You would like to see it prosper. We also have a purely positive attitude to the whole problem. When we say that we see an asset in the inclusion of the Litani, we do not say so because we wish to put the Arabs down or to take it away from the Lebanon and do it harm. We say so because on the one hand we do the Lebanon no harm, on the other the benefit would derive not only to us but to the area as a whole. On the other hand, as you yourself stated or certainly indicated, the inspiration of the Arab plan is political. They start from the point of view that it would not be politic nor practical to deny Israel water altogether. On the other hand, it is an Arab objective to deny Israel as much water as possible, and if you manage to step up the quantity and in the end adopt the impression that they may be prepared to agree to let Israel have more than the plan gives, that would be an achievement.

Supposing you were prepared to go along to the Lebanese and talk to them roughly on the following lines: I have just visited Israel, had long discussions which tried my patience, but in the course of time I discovered what is worrying Israel. I am convinced that they are looking further ahead than just the next two or three years and are worried about what is going to happen in 10 and 20 years from now, and I am convinced that it is not their objective to do Lebanon any harm. They are trying to do themselves a little bit of good. But the things which they suggest would not only do themselves some good, incidentally it would do good to the region as a whole and ^{not} least to your own allies and friends, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. You might then go on to say that as long ago as 1919 there was a plan for joining the Litani River at its bend with the Jordan Valley system. It did not come off for various reasons. (I know that the plan existed. In other words, all of us here in this part of the world have lived with the idea for 35 years).

This is no new spontaneous or obstructive plan of Israel to do the Lebanese down. This is something which as long ago as 1919, when techniques were not as they are now, was thought a most reasonable thing to do. It cannot possibly come as a shock to you. You heard of this 35 years ago, so please do not look as if there was some plot which Israel had concocted in a hurry in order to dish you or the Unified Plan. You might then go on to say: If you are looking for a way out with your Arab friends, you can find it easily. First of all you will be doing yourselves good by the proper development of the Litani. Secondly, it will be doing the Arab States a great benefit. Thirdly, you will be doing something which other countries have done and are doing at this moment. It is not unusual to allow other countries the use of a river when you don't. You could go on to say that objective surveys which have been carried out in the past (among them that of Mr. Clapp who presents the Unified Scheme) came to the conclusion, as recently as four or five years ago, that the inclusion of the Litani in the general water development is the most rational thing. In the economic survey, or something of that kind, and the report, they make no bones about this. So again this is not something Israel has just called up. The same people are now presenting this point of objectivity, and so on.

I am sure that we should feel a great deal happier if you could say that you personally had sympathy with that approach, and if possible would be prepared to have a shot at it. But when you say rather rigidly "it is the position of the U.S. Government that etc., etc," it gives us the feeling that perhaps not everything has been done to present to the Lebanese this point of view. This seems to me to be a rather political angle to the question, and personally at least I wondered how you feel about it.

Mr. Johnston:

I am delighted you raised the question. I think you must take our word for it that there is no chance now of doing anything about it. I can tell you that these are things that you feel, as well as things that you say. If I came to you now and suggested that in view of Arab solidarity you give up the Jordan because at one time they had a mill there or something, I do not think I would find very receptive ears to listen to my plea, irrespective of how well I coached the language. I am quite sure that I would find opposition to it: If it had been vigorously proposed on the other side that you give up all sovereignty to Lake Tiberias and allow it to be in Arab hands I do not think I would need to come to you and ask you individually, since I would feel that it was impossible.

If you want to go further - I personally talked to these people, and I can give you the names and places and the incidents that occurred, and I can assure you that at the moment it is quite impossible.

Mr. Eytan:

Would you yourself give intellectual assent to the proposition that the inclusion of the Litani in a regional water scheme was rational?

Mr. Johnston:

My position as a negotiator would be completely ruined, and if you want me completely to ruin my position that is the best way I know of to do so. Therefore, not desiring to have it collapse, I cannot answer that question.

Mr. Sharett:

Having been caught by the unpleasant experience that things repeated out of context can be interpreted falsely, I should like to make it clear that our insistence on the inclusion of the Litani has nothing to do with the question of frontiers.

Mr. Johnston:

I would suggest that we have the meeting tomorrow as scheduled with the experts telling all of us the situation. If we have the experts discuss the problems in front of us, then I think we would understand the problems more than in the absence of the benefit of such arguments. I would suggest that we should not try to approach any future interest that you have in the Litani. The engineering disputes regarding the uses and availability of the river are for the engineers. What I wish to say is that I feel the best way for you to protect your interests in the Litani is to pursue a policy of cooperation in the area, because I am fearful that any show of intransigence or show of force in any form would simply preclude its being attainable and that is what I do not want Israel to do. We are very interested in Israel, in your growth and development, prosperity and leadership in this area. You are not always right in your methods of approaching the goal. We had to have some means of allocation, so we took what is a well-recognized method of allocating waters, in some areas at least.

Let us get on to the question of storage of the Jordan and Yarmuk. In order to get the full utilization of the Yarmuk you have to store. We would say that Tiberias is the best place for storage, else-where you could not store. You have some ideas of your own, while the other side has its ideas. If any of this is done without some prior agreement, it will not lead to less friction, to a better understanding, to integration, but will lead to exactly the opposite course. And I do not think you can really expect the U.S. to put up this money only to get more friction and more problems and more trouble in the area. That is the position in which the President of the U.S. finds himself. The President has great pressures exerted on him to-day. Look at Senator Watkins, who visited the Near East a short while ago. He was complaining bitterly to him that he could not get any money to irrigate a project near the Colorado River which its people desperately needed. This entailed the expenditure of 80 or 90 million dollars. And Watkins complained why he was thinking of development projects here when they could not get the development of the Colorado River in the U.S. These are practical problems. And if we are going to put this money, we have got to try and get increased understanding and not increased frictions.

These are practical problems of water and engineering reports.

(It may be advisable to adjourn until tomorrow with an opportunity for our engineers to get together with your engineers and talk over some of the practical problems).

What we are trying sincerely to do is to try to work out something to give you water without any bitterness and frictions attached to it and pay for it in the process. How do we do that ?

Mr. Sharrett:

A point of information: When you refer to the question of financing, what sources do you envisage?

Mr. Johnston:

In the Arab world, they understand it will be done through the UNRWA; on your side through an appropriation of the Congress of the USA.

Mr. Bernstein:

The question of water supply for this country is a very old one. Talking of the Litani I want to recall that some 35 years ago there was an original plan that the Litani should be included in what then was intended to be British Mandatory territory. We have lost that battle not because of any Arab intervention but because of conflicting British and French interests. But the question of water supply of this country has haunted us all the time. So, if we are somewhat stiff in our attitude (I translate what you are thinking) it is not that we would not be prepared to acquire better understanding, if not peace, by giving water to the Arabs, but the question is how far we really can miss it.

Mr. Johnston:

I am not an expert on water or agriculture, and the question is first of all a question of experts to find out.