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8 April 1966

## ISRAEL - KEYSTONE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

By

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Israel - Keystone of the Middle East

by

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8 April 1966

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## SUMMARY

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 culminated a yearning which burned in the hearts of world Jewry for nearly 2000 years. During these centuries, Jews have suffered untold persecution, and were nearly wiped out in Europe during the Hitler regime in Germany. Is it any great wonder that Zionism, as an emotional and political movement, had so much appeal to the Jewish people?

The Middle East is the crossroad of the world in which every major power has such extensive interests that none can afford a shift in the balance of power.

Since that fateful day in 1948, the very existence of Israel has been challenged by the Arab world, which has set as its course the removal of Israel from the face of the earth. This Arab-Israeli dispute has reached such proportions that it threatens not only peace in the Middle East, but the peace of the world as well.

There are many issues which separate the Arabs and the Israelis. These involve borders, refugees, water, immigration, and many others. The real core issue, however, is the refusal of the Arabs to recognize the existence of Israel. All other differences could conceivably be resolved, if the issue of existence was not ever-present and seemingly insolvable. Moreover, as Israel grows and becomes more viable, the Arabs become increasingly alarmed and tensions grow stronger.

Although secondary to the "right to exist" issue, the use of the waters of the Jordan River poses grave problems and threatens the peace of the Middle East. The very nature of the land, arid and desert, makes water a necessity to sustain life. With four riparian states vying for its "liquid gold," the Jordan River is viewed as a prize to be fought over. This issue is so potentially explosive that the United States has become deeply involved in the effort to bring about an equitable solution.

It is concluded that Israel's title to her existence as a sovereign state is sound, but that Arab acceptance can only be achieved through a process of evolution. The United States can help the achievement of this goal by maintaining peace in the Middle East through continued economic aid, discouragement of the arms race, and acceleration of the joint water desalination project in Israel.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

"And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land of thy sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession."<sup>1</sup>

"And the land which I gave to Abraham and to Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land."<sup>2</sup>

The embroilment in the Middle East commonly referred to as the Palestine Question or the Arab-Israeli Dispute can be traced to the covenants made between God, Abraham, and Jacob some 36 centuries ago.

For twenty years the Palestine problem has been on the agenda of every session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and one of the most discussed items in the Security Council.<sup>3</sup> Many special United Nations organizations have been created to cope with the problem. So delicate and potentially explosive is the situation that few international organizations or world leaders have not become involved in the effort to resolve the bitter struggle between the Arabs and the Israelis. Innumerable plans have been suggested to bring peace to the Middle East. These have ranged from liquidation of the Jewish state at one extreme to Arab

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<sup>1</sup>The Holy Bible, Genesis 17:8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Genesis 35:12.

<sup>3</sup>"Arab-Israeli Conflict and the United Nations," International Review Service, Vol. VIII, 1962, pp. 1-2.

acceptance of Israel at the other. It would seem no effort has been spared to seek a formula for peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors.<sup>4</sup>

Why, then, is peace apparently as elusive as ever? Is the failure caused by inherent ill will of Jews and Arabs? What forces were involved that brought Israel into being? Why did the Jews select as their national home this small strip of land, an isolated island in the midst of an unfriendly Arab world? What are the major issues which have resulted in two shooting wars and innumerable border conflicts, the latest of which occurred as recently as October 1965?<sup>5</sup> How deeply has the United States become involved in the struggle for stability in the Middle East, and to what extent is she likely to become involved?

These questions set the stage for this study. Although there are many issues involved, only two will be discussed in depth, the Arab challenge to Israel's right to exist, and the explosive problem involving division of the Jordan waters.

Israel's very existence is the core issue separating the Arabs and the Jews. To the Arabs, Israel is a usurper. Palestine was inhabited predominantly by Arabs when Israel declared its independence and continuously for 1300 years before that date.<sup>6</sup> Because of this deep-seated feeling that Israel does not exist as a sovereign state, the Arabs cannot sit in conference with the Israelis to

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<sup>4</sup>Don Peretz, "Israel and the Arab Nations," Journal of International Affairs, Vol. XIX, No. 1, 1965, p. 100.

<sup>5</sup>New York Times, 1 Nov. 1965.

<sup>6</sup>Hedley V. Cooke, Israel - A Blessing and a Curse, p. 166.

negotiate their differences. On the other hand, the Jews point to their biblical history, their ties to the "promised land," and the fact that Jews have lived in Palestine and maintained those ties throughout centuries of Jewish dispersion. The world Zionist movement holds that there can be no Jewish state without the Holy Land.<sup>7</sup>

The second issue to be discussed in this study is that of the Jordan waters. This problem is inextricably entwined with the right to exist issue, since the latter appears to make negotiation impossible. The very nature of the land, arid and desert, makes water the "liquid gold" of the region.<sup>8</sup> Each side has threatened armed reprisal if the Jordan waters are diverted by the other. Both have announced that diversion will be considered an act of aggression.<sup>9</sup>

The volatile character of the entire Middle East situation, and the ever-present possibility of armed conflict, has posed major concern for the United States. An explosion in the Middle East could very well be the spark that ignites World War III, an eventuality which came close to fruition in the Suez Crisis of 1956.<sup>10</sup> It is no wonder that the United States has spent millions in economic and military aid, and has made every effort to avert

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<sup>7</sup>Peretz, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>8</sup>Kathryn B. Doherty, "The Jordan Waters Conflict," International Conciliation, Vol. 553, May 1965, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>10</sup>Stephen S. Goodspeed, The Nature and Function of International Organization, p. 371.



open warfare through direct negotiation with Israel and the Arab states. The impact on United States foreign policy, together with proposed courses of action, will be discussed later.

## CHAPTER 2

### ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST

#### GENERAL BACKGROUND

Israel is only one of more than fifty states that have come into existence since the end of World War II.<sup>1</sup> In many respects, however, its emergence as a sovereign state is unique. Although Israel is often referred to as the Jewish state, fifty years ago there were only a handful of Jews in Palestine. Between 1919 and 1933, the Jewish community in Palestine grew from 65,000 to 215,000. The Nazi persecution of the Jews caused the rate of immigration to jump dramatically; between 1933 and 1936, 166,000 Jews came to Palestine.<sup>2</sup> By 1948, when Israel declared her independence, there were still less than a million Jews in Palestine. Today, the population of Israel is more than 2,500,000, all of whom are Jews except for approximately 250,000, most of whom are Arabs.<sup>3</sup>

During the period of the Diaspora,<sup>4</sup> the people of Israel existed literally everywhere, yet in no one place as a cultural and linguistic entity. They came to Palestine from the four corners of the earth under the leadership of the World Zionist

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<sup>1</sup>United Nations, Everyman's United Nations, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Nadav Safran, "Israel Today: A Profile," Headline Series, No. 170, Apr. 1965, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>US Dept of State, Agency for International Development, Economic Background Highlights - Israel, Mar. 1965, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Term denoting world-wide dispersion of Jews. Funk & Wagnalls, Standard Dictionary, Vol. 1, p. 355.

Organization. Here, they strove to create a national identity long before declaring sovereignty over part of the territory. How was this national identity accomplished?

There have been many answers to this question. Some have emphasized the yearning of the Jews to return to the Holy Land in fulfillment of the divine promise; the driving force of anti-semitism has been stressed by many; even the Balfour Declaration, in which Great Britain promised a national home for the Jews in Palestine, has been postulated as an answer; and the United Nations Resolution of 29 November 1947, calling for the partition of Palestine, has been credited as the strategic event.<sup>5</sup> Only a combination of these factors, in conjunction with a militant, nationalist movement, Zionism, can adequately explain the origin of Israel.

#### BIBLICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

The roots of few modern problems are so deeply imbedded in the past as is the Palestine problem. To examine Zionism, therefore, as a purely political movement is to treat the subject superficially. Zionism as an emotional force is clearly discernible in Jewish history for over 2000 years.<sup>6</sup> An examination of Israel's right to exist is incomplete, unless this emotional force is considered.

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<sup>5</sup>Safran, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>William R. Polk and others, Backdrop to Tragedy, p. 133.

The tribal ancestors of the Jews migrated into Palestine thirty-two centuries ago and made portions of it their national home for about twelve centuries. Actual occupation of the land ended about 2000 years ago. Since then, the Jewish connection with the country has been steeped in the culture of Judaism. The faith of the Jews has been inseparable from their past life in Palestine and in the messianic expectation of its renewal.<sup>7</sup> This passionate longing cannot be lightly dismissed. While the Jews of Europe lived in the midst of poverty and religious persecution, their eyes were turned toward Jerusalem during their daily prayers. When the Jew built his house, he left a portion of it unpainted to remind him that Jerusalem was as yet unbuilt. At the circumcision ceremony, performed on all Jewish males at the age of eight days, mention is made of God's promise to Abraham to give him the land of Israel. At weddings a glass is crushed as a reminder that the Holy Temple is still destroyed. At the time of burial, a bag of earth, symbolizing earth from the Holy Land, is placed in the grave, so that the final resting place might be on sacred soil.<sup>8</sup>

It is the claim of world Jewry that Zionism existed as a spiritual drive for centuries before it evolved as a political movement.

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<sup>7</sup>James Parkes, End of an Exile, pp. 10-13.

<sup>8</sup>Polk and others, op. cit., pp. 133-139.

## POLITICAL ZIONISM

The traditional yearning for a national homeland was intensified by the persecution of the Jews and general anti-semitism in eastern Europe during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Jewish response to atrocities took the form of a militant, political movement called Zionism. Its avowed aim was the founding of a homeland for the Jews. Credit for the formation of the World Zionist Organization is generally given to Theodore Herzl, when he assembled a congress of Jews from all over the world in Basel, Switzerland in 1897.<sup>9</sup>

It is significant that the first Zionist congress considered Palestine as only one of several alternative places for the establishment of a national home. Other places suggested were East Africa and Argentina. However, when Great Britain later offered a territory in East Africa, the vast majority of delegates rejected the idea in favor of Palestine. It was apparent from the beginning that the attractive force of the Zionist movement was both its aim to seek a solution of the Jewish problem, and its strong spiritual attachment to the Holy Land.<sup>10</sup>

Not all Jews were attracted to the Zionist movement. Many felt that the propagation of Jewry was dependent upon the dispersal of Jews throughout the world rather than upon centralization. This

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<sup>9</sup>Walter Eytan, The First Ten Years, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup>Safran, op. cit., p. 9.

attitude prompted the Central Conference of American Rabbis to adopt the following resolution in 1897, immediately after Herzl's congress in Basel:

Resolved, that we totally disapprove of any attempt for the establishment of a Jewish State. Such attempts show a misunderstanding of Israel's mission which, from the narrow political and national field, has been expanded to the promotion among the whole human race of the broad and universalistic religion first proclaimed by the Jewish prophets. Such attempts do not benefit, but infinitely harm our Jewish brethren where they are still persecuted, by confirming the assertion of their enemies that the Jews are foreigners in the countries in which they are at home, and of which they are everywhere the most loyal and patriotic citizens.<sup>11</sup>

Herzl was not to be deterred. He traveled throughout the world gathering converts to his cause and raising funds. By the time of his death, Zionism was a vibrant, political movement, but its politics had taken a different turn. Herzl was impatient and attempted to get immediate concessions of territory in Palestine. His successors decided that more progress could be made in practical achievements. Accordingly, they began to purchase small tracts of land in Palestine, and to resettle European Jews. By 1914, 43 agricultural settlements with a population of 12,000 Jews had been founded. It was during this early period that Hebrew was established as the language of the settlers, and the roots of nationalism began to take hold and flourish.<sup>12</sup> Prophetically, Herzl entered in his diary on 3 September 1897 the following statement:

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<sup>11</sup>Polk and others, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

. . . at Basle I founded the Jewish State. If I were to say this today, I would be met by universal laughter. In five years, perhaps, and certainly in fifty, everyone will see it. The State is already founded in essence, in the will of the people to the State.<sup>13</sup>

Just a little over fifty years later, on 14 May 1948, Israel was declared a sovereign state.

#### THE PERIOD 1914-1948

The ultimate success of Zionism might not have been realized had it not been for the impact of the two world wars that made possible the triumph of so many movements of national liberation.

In 1917, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration which read:

His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine . . . .<sup>14</sup>

The Declaration was approved by the Allied Powers, and incorporated in the British Mandate for Palestine by the League of Nations on 24 July 1922.<sup>15</sup>

Arab reaction was immediate and violent. What right had the British and the League of Nations to grant a national home to the

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 153-154.

<sup>14</sup>George E. Kirk, A Short History of the Middle East, p. 150.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 151.

Jews in a territory already occupied by another people? Could they not foresee that they were sowing the seeds of future troubles in the Middle East? Arab anger at the British action was completely justifiable, because Palestine had been inhabited primarily by Moslems for 2000 years, and had been assumed to be Arab territory.

The Balfour Declaration was issued by the British for a number of reasons. First, it was a reward for Dr. Chaim Weizmann,<sup>16</sup> a brilliant chemist whose contributions to the British war effort were outstanding. More important, the British believed the Declaration would give them immediate political and long-range strategic advantages in the Middle East. Moreover, Great Britain felt that the Declaration and the Mandate would be acceptable to the Arabs. In fact, Arab spokesmen at the time accepted the Mandate and the Declaration on the condition that Arab demands for sovereignty in other parts of the Middle East would be met. Toward this end, when the French interfered with the promises of Arab sovereignty in Syria in 1920, the British attempted to compensate the Arabs by establishing Faisal as King of an enlarged Iraq. They also tried to install his brother Abdullah as the ruler in Transjordan in 1921. In this way it was hoped a balance would be restored between Zionists and Arabs.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>At this time, Dr. Weizmann was the leader of the World Zionist Organization. He was later to become the first President of the State of Israel.

<sup>17</sup>Safran, op. cit., p. 14.



Arab resentment could not be assuaged by such a compromise and Arab nationalism became stronger than ever. If the Zionists had paid more attention to Arab feelings at this time and make some concessions, the events of the future might have taken a different course. Zionist leaders, however, displayed little concern for Arab reactions, but put their faith in Britain to bail them out of any altercations with the Arabs. So flagrant was the Zionist attitude that an official report after the riots of 1921 stated that there could be only one national home in Palestine, and that in Jerusalem. Further, the report indicated that the Jews would not allow equality in any partnership between Arabs and Jews, but would only consider Jewish predominance as soon as their numbers were sufficiently increased.<sup>18</sup>

Jewish immigration into Palestine continued to grow as the Zionists continued to purchase more land. By 1936, clashes between Arabs and Jews were commonplace. After investigating the situation, Great Britain issued the Passfield White Paper, restricting immigration of Jews and the purchase of land in Palestine.<sup>19</sup> World War II and Nazi atrocities in Europe postponed any real action as a result of the White Paper. In 1944, as the war was drawing to a close, Great Britain made an effort to reinvoke its provisions, but the election of a labor government indicated its abolishment. Moreover,

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<sup>18</sup>Polk, and others, op. cit., p. 166.

<sup>19</sup>Hedley V. Cooke, Israel - A Blessing and a Curse, pp. 226-228.

the United States pressed Great Britain to permit the immigration of 100,000 Jewish refugees into Palestine.<sup>20</sup> Arab nationalism had also grown by this time and Arab leaders insisted on the creation of an Arab state in Palestine.

Pressures and armed outbreaks rose to the point that Great Britain could no longer contain the situation. In 1947, she turned the case over to the United Nations, which recommended a federal plan for settling the Palestine issue. The Arabs rejected the plan, indicating they would accept nothing less than an Arab state over the whole of Palestine. This rejection worked in favor of the Jews, since world sympathy took a turn toward their side. The United Nations had no alternative except to recommend partition of Palestine, a plan supported by the United States.<sup>21</sup>

Civil war broke out between the Arabs and the Jews. At first, the latter appeared to be losing the battle, primarily because of a lack of arms. When the United States refused to provide arms to the Jews, they turned to Czechoslovakia,<sup>22</sup> where they procured the necessary armament to turn the tide. In the subsequent fighting, the Jews routed the Arabs, and inflicted a defeat which was a tremendous blow to Arab national pride. Meanwhile, the British withdrew their forces from Palestine, despite United States insistence to the contrary. After the British completed their evacuation,

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<sup>20</sup>Polk, and others, op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>21</sup>Oscar Kraines, Government and Politics in Israel, pp. 2-6.

<sup>22</sup>Kirk, op. cit., p. 223.

the Zionists proclaimed the independence of Israel and its existence as a sovereign state on 14 May 1948.<sup>23</sup>

The Arab armies again moved in to destroy Israel, but were unable to halt the Jews and again suffered defeat. The United Nations sent mediators to bring peace to the troubled land.<sup>24</sup> Finally in 1949, General Armistice Agreements were signed by Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Israel. These agreements recognized de facto Jewish control over more territory than was originally allocated Israel under the United Nations Partition Plan.<sup>25</sup>

#### ARAB VS. ZIONIST NATIONALISM

The dispute between the Arabs and the Israelis<sup>26</sup> has not been settled to the present time. To the casual observer, the issues that separate the Arabs and the Israelis appear to be those involving refugees, border differences, and economic problems, such as division of the Jordan waters. In essence, it is really the deep ideological conflict that remains the root of the rift. Each lays claim to territory in which neither is willing to concede a loss. Nor has the Zionist military victory caused an overwhelming

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<sup>23</sup>Norman J. G. Pounds, An Atlas of Middle Eastern Affairs, pp. 100-104.

<sup>24</sup>United Nations, Everyman's United Nations, pp. 72-73.

<sup>25</sup>Safran, op. cit., pp. 15-21.

<sup>26</sup>From this point, Jews in Israel will be referred to as Israelis because of the national character assumed by the declaration of a sovereign state.

defeat of Arab nationalism. On the contrary, the Arab nationalist movement has been intensified by the defeat. The more secure Israel becomes, and the stronger she waxes politically, economically, and militarily, the greater becomes Arab resolution to liquidate her. Arabs cannot view Israel as she is seen through western eyes, a tiny nation of 8,000 square miles<sup>27</sup> and 2,500,000 inhabitants. They see it as an enemy and alien island that has removed the land bridge between the eastern and western Arab worlds. Moreover, they picture it as an international giant with strong friends in the western powers, and a tool in the Middle East of western imperialist nations.<sup>28</sup>

The Palestine defeat is considered tragic by the Arabs, not as a territorial loss, but as a threat of Zionist imperialism. These fears are so deep-seated that the entire Arab world is dedicated to the proposition that Israel must be eradicated from the face of the earth. Arab fears of Israel power and her close identity with the west were vividly portrayed by President Nasser of Egypt, when he said:

Arab soil must be purged of imperialism and stooges. Palestine must be liberated from the clutches of Zionism, and become an Arab country again. The objective is no longer a mere hope in our aspirations; it has become a bounden duty for which we must prepare ourselves. We must make full use of our scientific potential, of planning, of armed strength, and we must concentrate on winning public opinion. They

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<sup>27</sup>Hammond's World Atlas, Classics Edition, 1961, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup>Don Peretz, "Israel and the Arab Nations," Journal of International Affairs, Vol. XIX, No. 1, 1965, p. 101.

say it is a matter of Arab dignity in the war of 1948, that it is a racial dispute, a dispute over borders, or compensation for a number of homeless people. The true nature of the case has emerged; it is a foreign Zionist occupation of a part of the Arab land, from which a part of its population has been expelled.<sup>29</sup>

Arab fears of Israel's existence have caused them to expand their military budgets and dissipate their national resources and energies. Israel's reaction is a natural one. Continued Arab hostility at its present pitch of intensity only strengthens Israel's argument against any change in its militant position. Accordingly, Israel has defied pressures to make concessions to the Arabs on such vital issues as borders, the Jordan waters, and repatriation of refugees. It appears that Israel feels such concessions will only be looked upon as signs of weakness rather than indications of good will, and a desire to alleviate the tense situations.

#### PALESTINE REFUGEES

The Palestine refugee situation is an excellent example of Israel's refusal to make concessions. The Israelis are condemned because of their failure to take positive action in behalf of the Arab nationals who lost their homes during the 1948 war. Has Israel any responsibility toward the refugees? Despite her insistence to the contrary, the answer is an emphatic "yes." The Arab refugees left their homes in 1948 because of the fighting. This

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<sup>29</sup> Gamal Abdel Nasser, The Philosophy of the Revolution, Book 1, p. 67.

is understandable and not dissimilar from situations created by other wars. The difference lies in the fact that Israel refuses to repatriate these people on the grounds that their presence would constitute a threat to her security through acts of insurgency and sabotage. This thinking on Israel's part cannot be entirely discounted or disregarded. However, it is entirely possible that a solution involving partial repatriation and partial compensation might have been effected through the United Nations. Israel will only agree to direct negotiation with the Arabs, a circumstance to which the Arabs will not accede. Thus, a stalemate is created.<sup>30</sup>

There are, however, two sides to every coin. For many years prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, Jews had been leaving Egypt in large numbers because of the Palestine conflict. Until 1946, the Jewish community of Egypt, like other minority groups, had enjoyed the status and luxuries of "foreigners." During the Palestine War in 1948 many Jewish properties were confiscated, and employment became increasingly difficult. This resulted in an exodus of about 20,000 Jews from Egypt. After the 1956 Suez Crisis, only about 5,000 Jews remained. In all, approximately 55,000 fled Egypt devoid of any of their property and with no hope of regaining it. A similar situation prevailed in other Arab states.<sup>31</sup>

Great controversies have been stimulated over the Arab refugee situation that resulted from the 1948 hostilities. Little attention

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<sup>30</sup>Cooke, op. cit., pp. 193-223.

<sup>31</sup>Don Peretz, The Middle East Today, pp. 274-275.

is paid to the thousands of Jews who were forced to leave their homes in Arab lands at the same time. Although the number of Arab refugees was far greater than the number of Jewish escapees, the heart of the matter lies in the fact that Israel welcomed and was able to absorb the Jews. The Arab community, particularly Jordan, could not provide for the influx of Arab refugees.<sup>32</sup>

The entire refugee problem has brought a new question to light. Do the Arab leaders really want a solution to the refugee problem? Or do they prefer it to remain unsolved to be used as a political football and a strong propaganda arm against Israel? This thesis has been suggested and appears to have some basis.<sup>33</sup>

#### ISRAEL'S GROWTH

Since Israel became a state, what has she done to make herself a respected member of the world community of nations? Her growth has been phenomenal. Population has grown from less than a million in 1948 to over 2,500,000 in 1965.<sup>34</sup> In the first four years after establishment as a state, the population nearly doubled, and threatened to cripple the economy of the country in its effort to sustain so rapid a growth.<sup>35</sup>

Israel is actually a small, resource-poor country, a fact further aggravated by the Arab boycott of imports. In spite of these handicaps, Israel has been able to obtain sufficient external

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 276-277.

<sup>33</sup>Cooke, op. cit., pp. 193-223.

<sup>34</sup>See Ch. 2, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup>Safran, op. cit., p. 48.

assistance to finance a large foreign trade deficit, and to build up its productive resources. While the cultivated area has been rapidly expanded through irrigation, it covers only one-fifth of the country.<sup>36</sup> In this regard, the major problem lies in irrigating the Negev, the southern desert region, to provide for further immigration.

Intensive methods of production, and extensive irrigation have greatly increased productivity to meet the demands of the rapidly increasing population. Israel is now self-sufficient in essential foodstuffs with the exception of bread and feed grains. She has been able to export increasing quantities of peanuts, eggs, animals, animal products, and citrus fruits, the principal agricultural export.<sup>37</sup>

Few nations can approach Israel's rate of growth, and in few countries of the world has official United States assistance been as influential and productive as in Israel.<sup>38</sup> Approximately 25% of its national income is derived from industry, and this proportion is rapidly rising. About 35% of the industry is privately owned, with the remainder in the hands of the major labor organization, the General Federation of Jewish Labor or Histadrut. The mining of phosphate in the Negev and the extraction of potash from the Dead Sea are rapidly becoming important industries. A small

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<sup>36</sup>US Dept of State, AID, Economic Background Highlights - Israel, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Joseph Dunner, Democratic Bulwark in the Middle East, p. 7.



quantity of petroleum is produced, but output is not sufficient for domestic needs. Refinery capacity has been expanded so that petroleum products from imported crude oil are exported. In general, the total value of exports has doubled in the past five years.<sup>39</sup>

Israel's per capita income in 1950 stood close to the level of developing countries like Argentina. By 1964, it had reached the level of countries like Holland and Finland. Over the last thirteen years the Gross National Product (GNP) has increased by an average of eleven percent per year. No other country in the world outside the Communist bloc, whose figures are questionable, can boast such a level of sustained growth.<sup>40</sup> Israel's GNP has grown from \$1,538,000,000 in 1960 to \$3,111,000,000<sup>41</sup> in 1964.<sup>42</sup>

The United Kingdom, the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Communist bloc nations are Israel's major trading partners. The following statistics<sup>43</sup> are particularly significant in pointing out not only Israel's growth, but also her attachment to the western powers vis-a-vis the Communist bloc nations.

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<sup>39</sup>US Dept of State, AID, Economic Background Highlights - Israel, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup>Safran, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>41</sup>Expressed in US dollars.

<sup>42</sup>US Dept of State, AID, Selected Annual Statistics, Revision No. 210, Oct. 1965, p. 6.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>
Exports to:					
United Kingdom	36	36	38	48	46
United States	29	39	42	47	55
Germany	21	25	29	40	33
Communist bloc	4	7	8	10	15

Imports from:

United Kingdom	53	77	101	131	158
United States	131	168	208	185	203
Germany	68	82	62	61	65
Communist bloc	4	7	9	13	16

A considerable drain on Israel's resources, affecting her ability to expand economically, has been caused by the necessity to expend 22% of the GNP on national defense. This need, occasioned by the constantly threatening situation with her Arab neighbors, has forced Israel to modify considerably her economic development program. It is anticipated that defense outlays in both local and foreign currencies will be considerably larger than originally anticipated, with adverse effects on her balance of payments and budget.<sup>44</sup>

Intent upon building a strong domestic power base, Israel's advances in health, welfare, and education closely approximate those in the United States. The population is 90% literate and education is compulsory for children, ages 14-18, who have not completed primary school.<sup>45</sup> Life expectancy is 71 for males and

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<sup>44</sup>US Dept of State, AID, Development Program - Israel, Revision No. 185, p. 8.

<sup>45</sup>US Dept of State, AID, Summary of Basic Data - Israel, Revision No. 201, p. 4.

73 for females,<sup>46</sup> and the infant mortality rate is 27 per 1000 births.<sup>47</sup> There is one physician per 400 persons.<sup>48</sup> In the economic area, Israel is expanding her railroads, highways, merchant fleet, harbors, and electric power facilities at a rapid pace, far outstripping the efforts of any of her Arab neighbors.<sup>49</sup>

Despite this impressive record of economic achievement, Israel is still confronted with a number of difficult problems which seriously threaten her future welfare and development. Among these are inflation, excessive consumption, low savings, high labor costs, and most significant, a distortion in the allocation of resources for defense, necessitated by her dispute with the Arab states.<sup>50</sup>

Israel has developed a relatively powerful, although small, armed force, as attested by her ability to deter any major intrusion by the Arabs. Three basic assumptions have dictated the composition and policies of the Israeli Armed Forces, consisting of army, navy, and air force. These assumptions are: Israel will not fight any expeditionary wars; any war in which she is likely to become involved will be short requiring maximum concentration of forces in the shortest possible time in order to achieve political-strategic advantage before international intervention demands a cease fire; and in any conflict with the Arabs, reserves must be mobilized as quickly as possible, so that her armed forces can assume the

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Compares to 25 deaths per 1000 births in the United States.

<sup>48</sup>Compares to one physician per 740 persons in United States.

<sup>49</sup>Dunner, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

offensive and carry the fight into Arab territory. With these assumptions as the guiding principles, Israel maintains a small professional armed core of about 12,000 to 15,000 officers and noncommissioned officers. Conscription accounts for 40,000 to 50,000 men per year for short periods of training. These conscriptees will enable her to mobilize about 250,000 trained reserves within two or three days. These facts were borne out by her ability to mobilize so rapidly in 1956. Based on the assumption that any war in which she will likely engage will be fairly local involving relatively short distances, Israel's major emphasis has been on combat strength rather than logistical capability. To make this possible, she has developed a program which places great reliance on civilian facilities in cases of emergency.<sup>51</sup>

#### THE CORE ISSUE

As already noted (chapter 2), the problem of Palestine refugees could probably be settled through normal negotiation. Similarly, the other problems that separate the Arabs and the Israelis could be negotiated, if it were not for the insistence of the Arabs that Israel does not exist as a sovereign state, and the counter insistence on the part of the Israelis that negotiation can only be accomplished through face-to-face meeting with the Arabs.

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<sup>51</sup>Safran, op. cit., pp. 74-78.

The very existence of Israel is the real core issue. It is the dilemma which has led to the arms race, and has even aggravated the situation between the United States and the USSR. Except for a brief period during the Suez Crisis of 1956, the United States has provided extensive economic aid to Israel, despite the United States interest in Arab oil. On the other hand, the Soviet Union has tended to take the Arab side, particularly since the Suez Crisis. She sees in the Arab-Israeli dispute an opportunity to make deep inroads in the Middle East and to align the Arab world with the Communist camp. Thus far the Arab governments have done little to discourage Soviet infiltration.<sup>52</sup>

The "right to exist" issue eliminates any possibility of rational compromise. As long as Arab leadership regards the liquidation of Israel as the only solution to the Palestine problem, there can be no compromise. Israel, nor any other state for that matter, is likely to agree to its own liquidation.

#### IS ISRAEL'S TITLE SOUND?

The answer to the question, "Is Israel's Title Sound?" is an emphatic "yes." This conclusion is based on the foregoing analysis which ties the Jews to Palestine over a period of more than thirty centuries; the yearning for a national home; the need for a place to resettle Jewish refugees as a result of Eastern European and

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<sup>52</sup>Dunner, op. cit., pp. 25-27.

Nazi persecution; Israel's phenomenal development through arduous labor and diligent application of resources; and her rigorous tide of nationalism.

This is not to say that Israel has been a paragon of virtue. When she insisted on holding on to all territories won during the War of 1948, in excess of those allocated by the United Nations, Israel made it most difficult for those nations which aspired to be friendly with her. Reluctance to do anything concrete to relieve the refugee problem has not helped her cause. Her attack on Egypt in 1956, when it appeared the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Egypt might be settled peacefully, was most damaging to Israel's position and prestige. For a short time, this action alienated her strongest ally, the United States. Her unwillingness to negotiate the Jordan waters conflict, although rivaled by Arab actions, has not contributed to peace in the Middle East.

Nevertheless, Israel is there, a fact of life which even the Arabs recognize as a physical entity. Israel has been accepted in the world community of nations, and has been recognized diplomatically by nearly 100 sovereign states. She carries on trade with nearly every country in the world outside the Arab bloc. She has steadily increased this trade despite the Arab economic boycott and the denial of the Suez Canal to her use. This recognition by the vast majority of the sovereign states of the world, in itself

dictates that Israel's title is sound.<sup>53</sup> By the rules of international law, this force makes a state sovereign.<sup>54</sup>

It appears, however, that all the reasons which may be stated to justify Israel's right to existence will not convince the Arab states. Unfortunately, peace in the Middle East is not dependent on recognition of Israel by the world community. Rather, it may hinge on the refusal of the few Arab states to recognize Israel's existence and their avowed determination to regain Palestine as an Arab state.

The circumstances of contemporary history have brought Zionism and Arab nationalism into an inevitable clash over the territory of Palestine. Had these two movements flourished in different periods of history, they might not have conflicted. Arab nationalist aspirations will remain unsatisfied until all Arab lands, including Palestine, are within Arab borders. Thus far, the victors in the struggle have been the Zionists, for they have prevailed over every Arab attempt to thwart realization of their national goals.<sup>55</sup>

In explaining the Balfour Declaration, Sir Winston Churchill stated that "the Jewish people should know that it is Palestine as of right and not on suffrance."<sup>56</sup> Such utterances, however, even by so respected a statesman as Churchill, cannot appease the feelings and hurt national pride of the Arabs.

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<sup>53</sup>Cooke, op. cit., pp. 162-171.

<sup>54</sup>Charles G. Fenwick, International Law, pp. 144-145.

<sup>55</sup>Don Peretz, "Israel and the Arab Nations," in Journal of International Affairs, Vol. XIX, No. 1, p. 103.

<sup>56</sup>Don Peretz, The Middle East Today, p. 282.

When he returned to England after an investigation of the Palestine situation in 1936, Lord Earl Peel was much more prophetic:

The Arab community is predominantly Asiatic in character, the Jewish community predominantly European. They differ in religion and language. Their cultural life and social life, their ways of thought and conduct, are as incompatible as their national aspirations. These last are the greatest bars to peace. The war and its sequel have inspired all Arabs with the hope of reviving in a free and united Arab world the traditions of the Arab golden age. The Jews similarly are inspired by their historic past. In the Arab picture the Jews could only occupy the place they occupied in Arab Egypt or Arab Spain. The Arabs would be as much outside the Jewish picture as the Canaanites in the old land of Israel. The national home cannot be half-national. This conflict was inherent in the situation from the outset. The intensification of the conflict will continue, and it seems probable that the situation, bad as it is now, will grow worse. The conflict will go on. The gulf between the Arabs and the Jews will widen.<sup>57</sup>

Lord Peel's words appear as true today in 1966 as they were in 1936. What the end result will be, only time and the actions of mankind will tell.

One premise seems undeniable, that Israel has demonstrated, in deed and in fact, its right to exist in the world community of nations as a sovereign state.

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 285.



## CHAPTER 3

### THE JORDAN WATERS

#### GENERAL

Many problems bear heavily on the Palestine question, but the most exacerbating single issue, other than the right to exist, is that involving use of the waters of the Jordan River. The Jordan is a calmly flowing river, but its undercurrent is angry and turbulent as it affects the political situation and the peace of the Middle East. So tenuous and delicate is the Jordan issue that the United States has become deeply involved, and has spent and is spending great sums of money in an effort to prevent armed hostility between the Arab states and Israel over its use. As already stated, each side has threatened armed reprisal if the Jordan waters are diverted by the other, and both have announced openly that such diversion will be considered an act of aggression.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult for the western mind to contemplate the importance of water. In the United States, for example, water is generally plentiful. It is not considered an element over which wars could be fought. In the arid desertland of the Middle East, however, water means irrigation, cultivation, and life. United States Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes eloquently expressed the significance of water when he said, ". . . . a river

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<sup>1</sup>Kathryn B. Doherty, "The Jordan Waters Conflict," in International Conciliation, Vol. 553, May 1965, p. 7.

is more than an amenity, it is a treasure. It offers a necessity of life that must be rationed among those who have power over it."<sup>2</sup>

#### THE JORDAN RIVER BASIN

A picture of the Jordan River is essential to an intelligent understanding of its significance to the Arabs and the Israelis, and why they are prepared to battle over its use.<sup>3</sup>

The Jordan flows in a great rift that extends from northern Syria across the Red Sea into Egypt. It rises on the slopes of Mount Hermon in Syria, flows separately in the Hisbani, Baniyas, and Dan Rivers; and converges about 22 miles above Lake Tiberias to form the Upper Jordan. Here it is enlarged by numerous springs, and flows in a narrow channel to Lake Tiberias in Israel. It emerges from the southern end of the lake where it is joined by its main tributary, the Yarmouk River, and then twists a course through the Jordan Valley to empty in the Dead Sea about 90 miles away.<sup>4</sup>

The Jordan River is a major obstacle to peace in the Middle East because it involves four riparian states, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel, all of which lack sufficient and regular rainfall. Harnessing the Jordan to conserve winter flood waters for the summer months is the major prerequisite for industrial and agricultural growth. The physical characteristics of the river

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<sup>2</sup>US Supreme Court Opinion, *New Jersey vs. New York*, 1931, as quoted in Reports of the Foreign Scene, No. 5, Dec. 1964, and in article, "Water and Politics in the Middle East."

<sup>3</sup>See Map, Annex A, for all references to the flow of the Jordan River, its tributaries, and diversion projects.

<sup>4</sup>Columbia Encyclopedia, Vol. III, p. 1023.

make it particularly well suited for power production, so essential to industrialization. In its course from Mount Hermon to the Dead Sea, it drops approximately 2100 feet. While it is doubtful that the Jordan itself can provide adequately for both irrigation and power development, the Hisbani and Yarmouk Rivers are particularly suitable sources of hydroelectric power.

The international character of the Jordan is inherent in its origin. As has been shown, its three main sources rise in Lebanon, Syria, and Israel. The Jordan itself flows through northern Israel, then forms the border between Israel and Jordan below Lake Tiberias before flowing entirely within Jordan. The Yarmouk River forms part of the border between Jordan and Syria. At its southern portions it also forms the border between Jordan and Israel. Thus, each of the Jordan's tributaries except the Dan River, is an international waterway. While Israel is Jordan's upper riparian on the Jordan River, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan are Israel's upper riparians on the Hisbani, the Baniyas, and the Yarmouk.<sup>5</sup>

The significance of the Jordan River is intensified by the rapid population growth in each of its riparian states. This growth averaged 4.4% during the period 1950-1960.<sup>6</sup> Each is to a large degree dependent upon the Jordan system to provide increased irrigation and power for development. The situation in each of the affected states is described briefly below.

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<sup>5</sup>Doherty, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

<sup>6</sup>"Economic Developments in the Middle East," in United Nations Sales Publication No. 62, p. 181.

## SYRIA

Syria's population is approximately five million, about two-thirds of which is engaged in farming.<sup>7</sup> However, of the one-third of the country that is potentially arable, only 8.3% is presently irrigated.<sup>8</sup> Expansion of this arable land is essential to provide for the increasing population, since agriculture is almost certain to continue as Syria's main source of income. It is true that Syria lies along the Euphrates River and much of her irrigable land is serviced by it. However, water from the Jordan system is needed to irrigate the lands along the Baniyas and above Lake Tiberias as well as along the north bank of the Yarmouk.

## LEBANON

A country measuring less than 4,000 square miles, or about half the size of Israel, Lebanon has about 1,800,000 people.<sup>9</sup> Its rainfall is fairly abundant, and it has the only purely national river in the area, the Litani, which provides to the country a valuable source of needed power. The population is growing rapidly, however, and expansion of cultivated land is essential to support the growth. The Hisbani flows through Lebanon for about sixteen miles before crossing a corner of Syria to enter Israel. Part of its flow can

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<sup>7</sup>Hammond's World Atlas, Classics Edition, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup>Doherty, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>9</sup>Norman J. G. Pounds, An Atlas of Middle Eastern Affairs, p. 66.

be used for irrigation in Lebanon, but would only provide limited help in satisfying Lebanon's total water needs..

#### JORDAN

Jordan has an area of 34,750 square miles, exceeded in size among the riparians only by Syria.<sup>10</sup> Its population is over two million and growing at a rapid pace. In addition to the problems that are typical of the region, Jordan's situation is complicated by the fact that unemployed refugees from the 1948 war account for about 30% of the population.<sup>11</sup> Its lack of natural resources and low per capita income accentuate the need for rapid economic improvement. Only about five percent of the land is arable, and this depends on utilization of the water from the Jordan and Yarmouk Rivers. No other alternative exists for irrigating this land. Thus, the situation is most critical for Jordan. Development projects for irrigating this land have already begun.<sup>12</sup>

#### ISRAEL

Although the major resources of Israel are in the northern part of the country, large areas of arid but arable land lie in the southern tip, the Negev Desert. Her population of 2,500,000 is expected to increase to 3,000,000 by 1970. Israel's avowed

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<sup>10</sup>Hammond's World Atlas, Classics Edition, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup>Joseph Dunner, Democratic Bulwark in the Middle East, p. 21.

<sup>12</sup>Doherty, op. cit., p. 9.

policy of unlimited immigration, in accordance with her "Law of Return,"<sup>13</sup> makes development of the Negev a critical necessity. It is primarily in this area that Israel can resettle new immigrants. The policy of unlimited immigration poses a further threat to the Arabs and makes them more determined to prevent diversion of the Jordan River for use in cultivating the Negev. To provide space and sustenance for a larger population, Israel must expand agriculture and industry; therefore, she must transfer water from north to south. Although springs, wells, and several small rivers are available to fulfill some irrigation needs, hydroelectric projects and extensive irrigation in the Negev require utilization of the Jordan River system.<sup>14</sup>

#### THE FOUR RIPARIANS COMPARED

It is apparent that Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel have similar problems: resources are inadequate for fast growing populations; each has large desert or mountain areas where cultivation is difficult; and there is a desperate need for water in all these countries. Of the four riparian states, Jordan and Israel are most heavily dependent upon the Jordan River system for their economic development. Lebanon and Syria have other sources, but need a portion of the Jordan waters to irrigate certain land within their boundaries. While Lebanon and Jordan need the waters

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<sup>13</sup>Dunner, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>14</sup>Doherty, op. cit., p. 7.

primarily for irrigation, an important consideration in Syria and Israel is hydroelectric energy for industry.

DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Many plans have been drawn in an effort to provide equitable distribution of the Jordan waters. These have ranged from the Ionides Plan in 1939, before Israel achieved statehood, to the Arab Headwaters Diversion Plan in 1964. All the plans cannot be discussed in detail; however, a listing is considered appropriate to point out the magnitude of the effort that has gone into attempts at the solution of this problem.<sup>15</sup>

Ionides Survey . . . . .	1939
Lowdermilk Proposal . . . . .	1944
Hays Plan . . . . .	1948
McDonald Plan . . . . .	1951
All-Israel Plan . . . . .	1951
Bunger Plan . . . . .	1952
Israel 7-Year Plan . . . . .	1953
Main Plan . . . . .	1953
Cotton Plan . . . . .	1954
Arab Plan . . . . .	1954
Baker-Harza Plan . . . . .	1955
Unified Plan . . . . .	1955
Israel 10-Year Plan . . . . .	1956
National Water Plan . . . . .	1956
East Ghor Canal Project . . . . .	1958
Arab Headwaters Diversion Plan . . . . .	1964

Only those plans which have resulted in critical political implications and have involved the United States will be considered here.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

## THE ALL-ISRAEL PLAN

Israel actually began to divert the Jordan waters when she started to drain the Hula Marshes in her northern regions in 1951. This marked the beginning of the plan to flow water into the Negev Desert via a 100 mile national conduit, which was completed in 1963. The project initially called for drainage of the marshes into the Jordan headwaters north of Lake Tiberias, pumping from that point into the conduit, then southward toward the Negev. Flow of water began in 1964, but very little has reached or will reach the Negev.

Israel's pumps, as originally envisioned, were to be located in a demilitarized zone within Israel's borders. Syria immediately complained to the United Nations on the grounds that such action in the demilitarized zone violated the Syria-Israel General Armistice Agreement of 1949. When tension along the Israel-Syria border increased and armed violence broke out, the Security Council passed a resolution calling for stoppage of work in the demilitarized zone until a satisfactory agreement could be negotiated.<sup>16</sup> When an agreement could not be reached, Israel resumed work on the project in 1953. Again Syria complained to the United Nations on the same grounds. The real issue at stake, although not debated in the Security Council, was the Israeli plan to build a village

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<sup>16</sup>United Nations, Security Council Official Records, Resolution of 18 May 1951, 546th Mtg., para. 2.



in the demilitarized zone at the site of the proposed pumps. The Security Council warned Israel against diversion of any water from within the zone.<sup>17</sup> Israel, however, maintained she was legally entitled to the water, since the zone was within her sovereign territory. Nevertheless, under pressure from the United States, which threatened to withdraw financial assistance,<sup>18</sup> and to avoid sanction by the United Nations, Israel complied with the ruling and suspended work. Accordingly, she moved the site of the pumps to the northern end of Lake Tiberias. This change proved costly to Israel because the salinity of Lake Tiberias rendered the water unusable for the cultivation of citrus crops.

#### THE MAIN PLAN

The critical need to cultivate more land in Jordan to feed the thousands of Arab refugees prompted the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) to involve itself in Jordan water projects. It had cooperated with the Bunger Plan and the Jordanian government in 1952 in formulating plans for utilization of the Yarmouk River waters. However, Israeli objections to unilateral development of the Yarmouk led to withdrawal of proposed financing.<sup>19</sup> In an effort to seek further means to aid refugee resettlement, UNRWA conceived the idea of a unified

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<sup>17</sup>Georgiana G. Stevens, Jordan River Partition, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup>US Dept of State Bulletin, 2 Nov. 1953, pp. 589-590.

<sup>19</sup>Stevens, op. cit., p. 50.

regional plan in the hope that it would eliminate conflicts that had arisen from divergent plans. Accordingly, UNRWA requested the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) to develop such a plan. TVA employed the Charles T. Main Co., Inc., from which the plan derives its name. In essence, the Main Plan was based on data collected from previous development proposals. It attempted to combine those plans into one joint project that would make the most efficient use of available resources.<sup>20</sup>

In his letter of transmittal to UNRWA, Mr. Gordon Clapp, then Chairman of the Board of Directors of TVA, stated:

The Main Plan does not consider political factors or attempt to set this system into the national boundaries now prevailing. The present location of national boundaries suggests that the optimum development of the water resources of the Jordan-Yarmouk watershed can only be achieved by cooperation among the states concerned.<sup>21</sup>

It is for this very reason that the Main Plan was unacceptable to the Arabs and the Israelis. It is impossible to consider the Jordan River system outside the relevant political factors. The question of water allocation can only be approached in conjunction with other factors of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

The Main Plan was most important, however, because it represented the first effort at unified joint development of the entire

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<sup>20</sup>The Unified Development of the Water Resources of the Jordan Valley Region, Charles T. Main Co., Inc., passim.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. (Note: In 1949, Mr. Clapp had served as Chairman of the Economic Survey Mission of the Conciliation Commission for Palestine.)

Jordan system. It was not intended as a proposal to be accepted or rejected per se, but rather as a set of plans from which unified discussions might develop.

The plan was presented to Israel and the Arab states in 1953 by Special Ambassador Eric Johnston, a personal envoy of President Eisenhower. When he first went to the Middle East, Ambassador Johnston specified that suggestions would receive careful consideration as long as they did not interfere with the fundamental idea of a comprehensive and unified approach to the valley's development.<sup>22</sup> Before the Arab states would listen to his proposals, he had to assure them that they would not have any direct dealings with Israel over water. It was evident from the beginning that Arab agreement could only be obtained through a third party. The Arabs feared that any other course would imply recognition of Israel. On the other hand, Israel refused a neutral or international water authority because of her strong desire to force Arab recognition by direct negotiation.<sup>23</sup> In a broadcast statement by the Israeli Foreign Minister on 30 November 1953, Israel's position was made clear.

As to the question of regional water planning, we were the first to declare our willingness to sit together with our three neighbors who may have joint water interests with us, for the purpose of discussing a regional arrangement based on a just distribution of water sources. As long as no arrangement of this sort exists because the neighbor states refuse to meet with Israel, we consider

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<sup>22</sup>Doherty, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

ourselves free to use the water of the rivers which flow in our territory as our property. We are convinced that the undisturbed continuation of Israeli development works constitutes perhaps the most effective method to insure regional cooperation.<sup>24</sup>

The Arabs and Israelis had other objections to the Main Plan. Lebanon's national river, the Litani, was not included in the survey. Israel argued that, if a regional plan was to be undertaken, it should include all the water resources of the region. In addition, Israel felt strongly that her allocation of water was insufficient to provide for her needs. On the other hand, the Arabs objected vehemently that the allocation of 33% of the water to Israel was excessive. Moreover, the Arabs were unwilling to submit to any plan that provided for storage of Yarmouk water in Lake Tiberias, since such storage would give Israel control over water allocated to the Arab states.<sup>25</sup>

#### COUNTERPROPOSALS TO THE MAIN PLAN

After considering the Main Plan, and expressing their objections to it, Israel and the Arab states offered counterproposals. Israel's plan, called the Cotton Plan, was prepared by Joseph Cotton, an American engineer serving as consultant to the Israeli government. The Arab Plan of 1954, a counterproposal, was drawn by the Arab League Technical Committee. These two plans represented

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<sup>24</sup>Stevens, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>25</sup>Doherty, op. cit., p. 23.

a major advance in the thinking of both sides, since, for the first time, they were regional plans rather than unilateral projects.<sup>26</sup> They both recognized riparian rights, which indicated a realization that regional cooperation offered the best means for efficient utilization of the water resources. Nevertheless, there was still considerable disagreement between the conflicting parties. Neither side could agree on the allocation of water, and the Arabs clung to their policy that Jordan waters should not be used outside the Jordan River basin. Israel could not agree to the latter, since it would mean no water to the Negev. To the Arabs, water in the Negev encourages immigration, which in turn means an increase in Israel's armed forces, industry, and agriculture. These factors are viewed as a threat by the Arab states. Moreover, the Arabs fear that increased population pressure on Israel's resources may become a stimulus to aggressive military expansion.<sup>27</sup>

#### THE UNIFIED PLAN OF 1955

Ambassador Johnston made four trips to the Middle East in pursuit of a settlement of the Jordan waters issue. The final proposal, the Unified Plan of 1955, embodied the best elements and the most commonly agreed areas of the Main Plan, the Cotton

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Edward Rizk, "The River Jordan," in Information Paper No. 23, Arab Info. Ctr., 1963, p. 33.

Plan, the Arab counterproposal, and several others. It allocated the Jordan waters as follows:

Jordan . . . . .	480 mcm/yr <sup>28</sup>
Syria . . . . .	132 mcm/yr
Lebanon . . . . .	35 mcm/yr
Israel . . . . .	The residue after the above amounts claimed by the Arabs. Estimated at 466 mcm/yr, a compromise between Israel's claim and Arab proposal. <sup>29</sup>

This plan, therefore, took cognizance of Arab desires to insure adequate water for the Jordan River watershed, and made provision for Israel to use her share as she desired.

Both sides again objected to the plan. Major objections were water allocation and the question of international supervision. Israel continued her insistence upon direct supervision by the states concerned. Although the Arabs had previously indicated a preference for international authority, they now indicated a fear that even acceptance of such a plan might imply recognition of Israel.

Ambassador Johnston had made great strides in achieving a wide area of compromise. His mission was considerably enhanced by the fact that he carried with him an offer of US funds to cover two-thirds of the cost of the project, estimated at \$200,000,000.<sup>30</sup> Despite the financial inducement and the fact that Israel had

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<sup>28</sup>Million cubic meters per year.

<sup>29</sup>Stevens, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 31.

meanwhile consented to a neutral supervising authority, it is noted that the Arabs would not give formal acceptance to any plan that would also help Israel's development.

#### POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

When the Arab states shelved the Johnston Unified Plan, it marked the end of the closest approach to an agreement. It became clear that the Jordan waters issue was linked directly to political considerations, primarily the matter of Arab recognition of Israel. In addition, the Arabs harbored deep suspicion of US intentions in urging acceptance of the plan, and the US offer to finance a large portion of the project was exploited by them. They depicted the plan as a scheme to help Israel increase her immigration and as a bribe to make the Arabs accept a strengthened Israel.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the political and economic boycott of Israel has been a major weapon of the Arab states. Denial of the Jordan headwaters is an aspect of this boycott, since it considerably limits Israel's long term plan to carry northern water to the Negev.

#### RETURN TO UNILATERAL PROJECTS

The breakdown in negotiations for a unified regional settlement caused both Israel and the Arabs to return to their unilateral plans for diversion of the Jordan waters--diversion which could threaten peace in the Middle East.

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

Israel is pumping water from Lake Tiberias through the national conduit. She plans to open a third pumping station in the near future. Despite salinity of the water, a third pumping station is expected to carry water to the Negev, thus enabling increased immigration. Undoubtedly, this will further aggravate the Arabs.

To counter Israeli moves, the Arab League has formulated plans to divert the Jordan headwaters in Syria and Lebanon before they flow into Israel. One proposal involves diversion of the Hisbani into the Litani in Lebanon; another diverts the Baniyas and the Hisbani through Syria into the Yarmouk to be used for irrigation in Syria and Jordan. Although these plans have not been made public, their objective appears clear. The flow of the Jordan's upper tributaries will be used for irrigation in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, thereby denying use of the waters to Israel. Such diversion would reduce Israel's flow from the Jordan to approximately 300 mcm/yr, a quantity Israel claims is far below her needs of 550 mcm/yr.<sup>32</sup>

The Arabs have not yet initiated any large-scale diversions primarily for fear of military confrontation with Israel. Arab plans, therefore, are tied to their military capability to back them. Any order for execution of the plans will apparently come from the Arab Unified Military Command. At the Arab Summit

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<sup>32</sup>Doherty, op. cit., p. 12.



meeting in Cairo in January 1964 and again at Alexandria in September 1964, Syria and Lebanon indicated they did not desire to initiate any diversion schemes that might provoke Israeli attacks, unless the Unified Military Command could provide defensive forces to cope with such an eventuality. Arab leaders, however, appear to agree that Israel presently has superior military capability and that any proposal involving the use of military forces would be doomed to failure.

Although an immediate attack on Israel over the Jordan issue appears to be ruled out, Israel's continued withdrawals from Lake Tiberias have further antagonized the Arabs. It has also promoted a measure of unity among the Arab states, that has helped to overcome their differences over Yemen, Arab nationalism, and the question of leadership in the Arab world. This unity, however, does not present a solution to the dilemma that faces them. If they attempt to divert the waters they risk open conflict with Israel. It is generally agreed that they cannot afford this at the present time. If they wait too long to divert the waters, Israel may be able to establish lawful rights, and deprive Lebanon and Syria of legal recourse.<sup>33</sup>

It is apparent that the present situation contains innumerable dangers and uncertainties. The Arabs consider the water withdrawals in 1964 as a matter equal in seriousness to the establishment of

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<sup>33</sup>Stevens, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

Israel in 1948. The result has been an arms race, a buildup of forces along the shaky armistice line, and sporadic outbreaks. The opening of a third Israeli pumping station at Lake Tiberias could set in motion another series of disputes to further aggravate the situation. Hopefully, these disputes will be registered as complaints with the United Nations, rather than resorting to armed conflict. At the United Nations, however, the same old familiar arguments will be aired again. Israel will point to her willingness to comply with the allocation schemes of the Johnston Plan; to her sovereign right to use her share of the water where it will do her the most good; to her willingness to negotiate with the Arabs who refuse to negotiate with, or recognize her; to her right to bring into Israel as many immigrants as she chooses; and to her authority to use her resources, including water, to provide for the increased immigration. On the other hand, the Arabs will revive the refugee problem. They will also argue their right to use the Jordan waters as they please, where those waters flow through Arab territory.<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile, Israel and the Arab states face each other in a warlike posture, and no international scheme has yet appeared to calm their intense enmity for each other.

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

## DESALINATION - HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

The foregoing analysis appears to offer little hope for a peaceful solution of the Jordan waters problem. However, there may be such a hope--in technology, not in armed forces, arms races, and impractical schemes that do not address themselves to the core of the issues involved.

It was previously stated that the waters of Lake Tiberias, diverted through the national conduit in Israel, have proven unsatisfactory because of their excess salinity. Desalination, therefore, has become a major project in Israel, not of the waters of Lake Tiberias, but of the Mediterranean Sea.

The problem of salinity and desalination is most significant, since it can have a marked effect on US policy insofar as relations with Israel and the Arab states are concerned. The United States has become the chief financial supporter of both Jordan and Israel. US aid to Jordan between 1946 and 1963 has totaled \$385,000,000.<sup>35</sup> During the same period, aid to Israel has amounted to \$957,000,000.<sup>35</sup> A large portion of these funds has been used to import food, which is in short supply because of a lack of cultivated land. It is in the US economic interest, therefore, to encourage the Arab states and Israel to become more viable and self-sufficient by means of water development. Moreover, it is of primary interest to the United States to contain the explosive political situation which could easily involve her.

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

Thus far, US funds for water works in Israel have been applied to general irrigation projects. More recently, however, there has evolved a growing common concern between the United States and Israel for the improvement of desalting techniques. This has led to agreement between President Johnson and Prime Minister Levi Eshkol of Israel to cooperate in future studies. As a result, a joint United States-Israel Technical Team has been conducting studies to define the scope of the program in Israel. A joint communique issued in June 1964 during Prime Minister Eshkol's visit to the United States read:

It is hoped that, on the basis of these surveys and studies, an economic desalting project of mutual technological interest, producing substantial quantities of water for specialized agricultural and industrial use, will be undertaken by Israel with the active participation of the United States. The International Atomic Energy Agency will be invited to participate in the program from the beginning, including acting as an observer in the joint studies. As agreed by President Johnson and Prime Minister Eshkol, the knowledge gained from this program will be made available to all countries with water deficiencies.<sup>36</sup>

In August 1964, Israel announced her future water projects would be based on technology rather than geography. It is Israel's hope that joint studies will result in the construction of a nuclear plant for distillation of sea water in Israel. Technologists have described the plant as an installation that would supply 150 to 200 megawatts of power and 80 to 165 million gallons of fresh water

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

daily. If all goes well, and if the United States provides the financial aid estimated at \$200,000,000, it is anticipated that work on an actual plant will begin in 1967, with target date for completion in 1971.<sup>37</sup>

Israel is extremely enthusiastic about the desalination project. She feels that it can ultimately create an artificial Jordan River in Israel. She is confident that such a water source would enable her to cultivate the Negev without infringing on neighboring states. This hopeful technological step, therefore, could conceivably relieve some of the pressures on the Jordan River system, and open a new phase in Middle East economic development. Most important, such a project may reduce some of the political and military tensions, and mark the first step toward peace in the Middle East.

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 61-62.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

United States policy in the Middle East can be summarized as an effort to ensure Israel's survival as an independent state and, at the same time, maintain friendly relations with the Arab world. On the surface, this would appear to be an impossible task and to connote a vacillating policy. For example, in 1948, the United States recognized the State of Israel within hours after she declared her independence; in 1956, we led the way in the United Nations in condemning Israel for her attack on Egypt during the Suez crisis; we encouraged and aided Israel's water projects, but threatened to suspend financial assistance if she continued to construct pumping stations in the demilitarized zone; and we have provided extensive economic and military assistance to Israel and the Arab states, particularly Jordan, with full cognizance that they are avowed enemies.

What appears to be a vacillating policy is, in fact, a sincere effort to prevent a renewal of hostilities in the area. Considering the ethnic background of the Arabs and the Israelis, the deep-seated and emotional characteristics of their conflicting nationalisms, and the avowed refusal of the Arabs to recognize the existence of Israel, the United States can take no other course of action except to strive to maintain the status quo. Careful consideration must be given to the facts that we have major economic

and political interests on both sides of the armistice line, that our population and citizenship include large numbers of Arabs and Jews, and that any outbreak of hostilities would inevitably involve us, perhaps militarily.

It is precisely for these reasons that we must play a watchful and waiting game. The United States can do nothing to solve the "right to exist" issue. We can only hope that our continued support of Israel as a member of the world community will eventually assuage the Arabs, since they too seek US aid.

In our efforts to prevent a renewal of hostilities, we should refrain from aggravating the growing arms race by refusing to sell arms of any kind to either side. It is conceivable that the Soviet Union and Communist China might then provide more arms. However, we have a trump card at our disposal to discourage such action. The economic aid we provide the Arabs and the Israelis spells food, clothing, social advancement, and perhaps even survival. It is extremely doubtful that either the Soviet Union or Communist China would match our contributions. The United States should continue economic aid, but should tie that aid to the condition that the arms race will cease. We should also make it clear that recipients of our aid may not turn to any other source for military assistance and arms.

Desalination appears to be the only logical solution to the Jordan River waters problem. Creation of enough fresh water in Israel to enable her to continue development without large

withdrawals from the Jordan system will leave more water for the Arabs states. Although this is only one of the many problems in the Palestine question, a step-by-step, piecemeal solution is far better than no solution at all. The United States should place priority on completion of the joint desalting studies and encourage completion of the plant construction as quickly as possible.

It has already been stated that very little can be done politically to solve the "right to exist" issue. Does this mean that all-out conflict between the Arab world and Israel is the only solution? Or is there perhaps a long-range hope to end this dilemma? If the status quo and relative peace can be maintained for a period of one or two generations, there may be some hope. The solution is evolutionary rather than political. Only the passage of time holds the hope of assuaging the bitterness on both sides. From its beginning, Israel has not established itself as a Middle East nation, but has identified itself as typically European. For this reason, she is viewed as a western thorn in the midst of the Arab world.


Demographically, Israel's population is constantly assuming a more mid-East flavor. Immigrants from Asian and African countries now account for approximately 52% of the Israeli population. Although these Israelis do not currently enjoy the same status as European Jews, full assimilation is simply a matter of time. In other words, time alone will make of Israel a Middle East state.

On the other hand, the Arab world is gradually becoming modernized. Arab leadership is striving to bring western culture,



industry, and standards of living to their people. Therefore, as Israel becomes more "Middle East," and the Arabs become more "West," it is possible that the people will become more attuned to each other. Only in this way will the Arab desire to liquidate Israel wither away.

This is a hope for the future, a hope for peace in the Middle East. It is a hope that must be fostered by the great powers of the world, particularly the United States.



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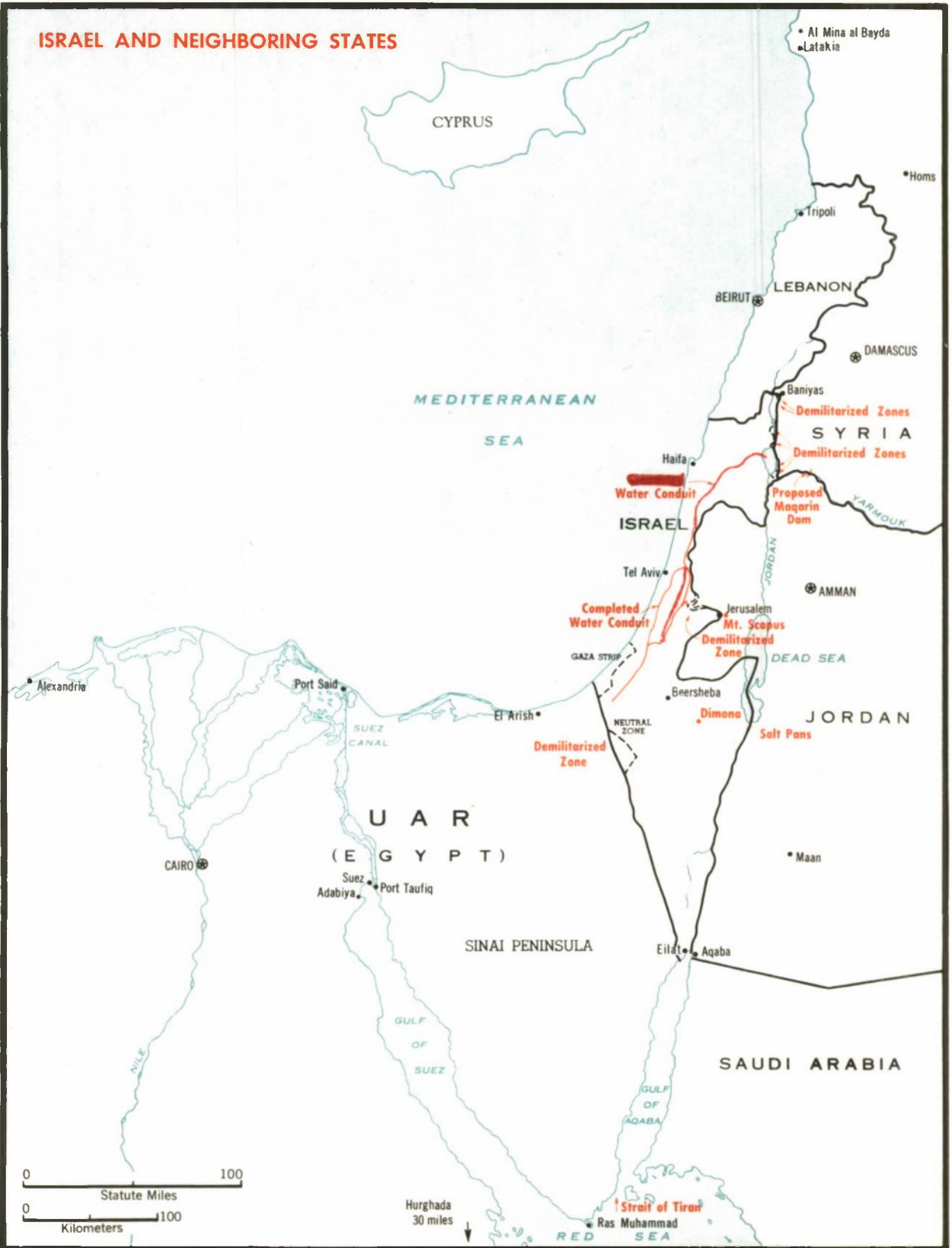
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