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PREMIER ESHKOL AND "TIMES" MEN ON MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

(VIDEO: The NET symbol.)

(AUDIO: NET musical theme.)

ANNOUNCER: The following program is from NET, the National Educational Television Network.

(VIDEO: Program captions.)

The National Educational Television Network and the New York Times present News in Perspective: Special Report on the Middle East, with Lester Markel, Seymour Topping, Seth King and Hedrick Smith.

(VIDEO: The Times men named were seen at a table in a reproduction of an editor's office at the New York Times.)

MARKEL: Today we propose to discuss the crisis in the Middle East. The tension continues there, even though there is talk, somewhat vague talk, of peace negotiations. One soon senses the general atmosphere in Jerusalem. The old Arab city has been joined by the Israelis to the new Jewish city. The two peoples mingle here, yet the visitor is quickly aware that under the deep superficial calm emotions are running. Israeli troops stand throughout the city; they conduct careful search

to detect potential sabotage. Jews sit as visitors in Arab cafes, yet the prevailing resentment is seen on the face of an Arab passer-by. Israelis come as tourists to the hitherto forbidden places: the Dome of the Rock and other Moslem holy sites. They proceed in great number to the Western Wall, known to the Jews as the Wailing Wall, and there even Israeli soldiers are found in prayer.

Thus there is a mingling of the two peoples, but there are the overtones of ancient enmities that the visitor senses in the so-called City of Peace, Jerusalem. Two weeks ago we discussed the immediate situation. Today we propose to take a larger look. We plan to deal as expertly as we can with the fundamental elements in the situation: the importance of the area, the conflicting ambitions of the great powers, the clashing views of Arab and Israeli, the prospects of peace.

I, Lester Markel, moderator, editor and provocateur of the proceedings of the proceedings -- recently in Israel and in Washington I've tried to discover what are the basic elements in the situation. Thus I am a seven-day expert. My companions today have much more impressive credentials: an all-seeing editor and two veterans, except for their ages, foreign correspondents -- Seymour Topping, foreign editor of the Times, and has traveled almost as Ulysses himself; Seth King, lately reporting from Jerusalem before, during and after the war; and Hedrick Smith, long stationed in Cairo and an expert analyst of the Arab mood.

(VIDEO: The Times men in closeup as they were named.)

We'll begin then with a discussion of the importance of the area. Mr. Topping, will you please, as you're so able to do, provide the background?

(VIDEO: The participants in close-up as they spoke.)

TOPPING: Once again, as often in the past, the Middle East is a focus of international concern and interest because of its geographic importance, its place in the Cold War, and its economic significance. The Middle East is a major crossroad, lying at the confluence of three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa, and kind of a link between the developed and the developing world and a key to that strategic body of water, the Middle Sea, the Mediterranean.

(VIDEO: A map showed the region.)

Russia has a special interest in the area. Her access to the Mediterranean is now limited by Turkish control of the Dardanelles -- number one on the map. She seeks bases in North Africa -- number two on the map -- to broaden Soviet influence and to insure presence in the Mediterranean -- number three -- which would offset U.S. military power in the area, especially the Sixth Fleet.

At the vortex of all this is Israel, a small island of 8,000 square miles in a large Arab sea. During the war the Israelis occupied the Arab territories shown in black on the map. These comprise 23,000 square miles, almost three times the area of Israel itself. The surrounding Arab countries fall into two main groups. The first includes the United Arab Republic, Jordan and Syria, the three states that actively took part in the June war. They are the Arab have-not states. The second group comprises states which, while expressing support for Nasser, did not engage in the war. These include Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait and Lebanon. These are in the main "have" states.

What they have is oil, and economically the Middle East is important because of this oil. The region is second only to the United States in oil production. It produces 70 per cent as much as we do. But the Middle East economy is more dependent on oil exports than any other region. Thus, geography and economics combine to make the area one of vital interest to the great powers.

MARKEL: Gentlemen, before we talk about the importance of the area, let's speak briefly about what's happened since the end of the war in June. Mr. Smith, what, as I said, briefly, has been happening in Egypt?

SMITH: Well, in Egypt we've had arrest of a number of officers for participating in a plot against President Nasser, but nonetheless he appears to maintain control of the political situation there. We had recently the sinking of the Israeli destroyer Eilat and the Israeli reprisal by destroying much of the two Egyptian oil refineries at Suez.

Economically, the situation in Egypt is poor, has been for years. The war and the aftermath of the war, including the reprisal against the oil refineries, has made the economic situation much worse.

MARKEL: You haven't said a word about the Russians. Have they been doing nothing? (Laughter.)

SMITH: The Russians have been in Egypt for quite a while, but quite clearly they've increased their presence since the war. They began with amazing speed to resupply the Egyptian armed forces to the point where the Egyptians have now got about 65

per cent of what they lost in the war in terms of military equipment, particularly aircraft -- high-speed jets -- and a fair proportion of their tanks back. They have completely replaced the entire Soviet military mission there, apparently being disappointed in the performance of the Russians who were in Egypt at the time before the war, not realizing that their military estimates of the Egyptians were so bad before the war. (Laughter.) But the numbers of Russians in the military advisory group don't seem to have increased much, but we do see much more of the Russian navy in Egyptian ports: in Alexandria and Port Said. This began a couple of years ago, but since the war it's been it's been pronounced. The Russian ships have just been sitting in Egyptian harbors.

MARKEL: What about--Mr. King, what's been happening in Israel in this period?

KING: Well, their first problem, of course, after winning territory was to bring it back as quickly as they possibly could to a normal or to a status as close to normal as they could make it. They have been--of course, they have brought the Arab section of Jerusalem into the Israeli section of Jerusalem. They don't like to use the word, annex, but that's pretty much what it is. They have joined--

MARKEL: 'Coordination' is the word.

KING: --the two of them-- Well, 'municipal unification' is what one of them called it once. (Laughter.)

NEWSMAN: City planning.

KING: City planning -- but anyway, it's--as far as-- in effect, Jordanian Jerusalem is now a part of Israel. On the other hand, they have not extended their legal systems, they have not taken in the other sections that they occupy. What they have been doing in places like on the west bank of Jordan, the part that's beyond--west of the Jordan River, they have-- their main problem was to get the Israeli--get the Jordanian crops moving to their normal markets, which were in--have always been traditionally to the east of them, that is, into unoccupied Jordan, and Amman and to Damascus and areas like that. This the Israelis have done, simply by turning their backs and letting the Jordanian trucks go across a ford in the river.

And in Gaza, they have largely been -- which--a very badly overcrowded area -- they have largely been maintaining order, which has been surprisingly easy for them. The same thing has been true in the Sinai peninsula.

MARKEL: Right. Well, now, before we discuss the moods

on both sides, I think we'd better include in this picture of events, Rick, something about what's been happening about Jordan. King Hussein has been traveling around -- to what purpose?

SMITH: Well, I think that King Hussein's visit to the United States has a number of purposes from his point of view. First off, from a very selfish point of view, he wants to improve his posture, both in the Arab world and in the world at large. After all, he's lost about half of his country, and economically the most beneficial half, so that he's trying to regain some stature, but he's after much more than that. He is trying also to regain part of his country, as much of his country as he can get back. So he's moved on to the diplomatic offensive to try to begin to bring some international pressure on Israel to relinquish some of the Arab territories that it conquered during the war.

NEWSMAN: Well, now, don't you think--

MARKEL: Well--

NEWSMAN: I was about to say: Don't you think also we should add he represents, still somewhat undefined, many of the other Arab leaders to some extent?

SMITH: Well--

NEWSMAN: He's sort of a front man for them at this time in the United States.

MARKEL: Well, isn't this a matter of great dispute whether he does represent -- you say among the -- does he represent Nasser? Now, he said that he did, and I guess, Rick, you heard him say it, but were you convinced? (Laughter.)

SMITH: Well, I think that's a critical question. Let's set aside a couple of other people that he doesn't represent quite clearly. The Syrians and the Algerians are the most extreme militants in the Arab world today. Quite clearly he doesn't represent them.

MARKEL: Because he is, you say, a moderate.

SMITH: He's far too moderate. For them--

MARKEL: Without quotes, or with quotes?

SMITH: No, without quotes, particularly relative to them.*

NEWSMAN: And the Iraqis, I suppose, he doesn't repre-

* Quotes for the word, moderate.

sent.

SMITH: Well, the Iraqis will probably wind up by going along with whatever Nasser will buy.

NEWSMAN: Yes.

SMITH: But the important thing is: Does he represent President Nasser? We have had some indication that the Egyptians are willing to go along with the American five-point outline for the Middle East, which suggests that they are backing Hussein in his mood, at least.

MARKEL: Well, we imagine--you'd better say what that five-point outline is. We try to supply footnotes in this program. (Laughter.)

SMITH: The five-point outline comes from a speech that President Johnson made on June 19th, and at that point he set out five guidelines for peace in the Middle East: the first being the right of all nations to exist; the second being justice for refugees, referring to Arab refugees of Palestine; the third being respect for maritime rights, meaning Israeli access to the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba and the Straits of Tiran; the fourth point being limiting the arms race in the area; and then finally the fifth point, respect for the political independence and territorial integrity of all the countries in the area.

NEWSMAN: I think those five points to me sound somewhat like the Bible, that is, that --

MARKEL: The Ten--half Ten Commandments.

NEWSMAN: Yes--no, I'm not talking about the Commandments. (Laughter.) I think that each of the Churches has an opportunity to interpret the Bible as it sees fit, and I think that's what the Israelis and the Arabs will be doing.

NEWSMAN: Well, somebody remarked to me the other day that there are a lot of camels' noses that can fit under that tent. (Laughter.)

MARKEL: I think that's fair enough. But, Top, what would you say the American--we've talked about the Russian position and you've delineated the Russian interest in the area. What would you say the American policy is? Or should I put this to a Washington fellow? You're foreign editor and...

TOPPING: Well, I'll take a crack at it; then I dare him to disagree. (Laughter.) I would say that, in the first instance, it's something very simple. We're so preoccupied in

Vietnam I think we would just like to keep the cap on the Middle East and let us get on with the business in Vietnam. We don't want to be diverted.

Then, in general, I think we want peace in the area, we want stability in the area, we want to do the impossible: be friends, good friends, of both the Israelis and the Arabs at the same time on the same basis--

MARKEL: And make sure the Russians don't gain control--

TOPPING: And we want to keep the Russian presence there limited.

MARKEL: This shouldn't be number one on your list?

TOPPING: No, I don't think so. I don't believe, myself, that at the moment this is a critical problem. I think that if the situation there remains fluid, then there would be a possibility that the Russians might be tempted and we might react, and with that, might lead to some sort of difficulty.

MARKEL: Tempted to do what?

TOPPING: Tempted to expand their position in the Middle East to a point that we would not tolerate, and that we would react in some way.

MARKEL: Well, are you talking about military things or economic, or influence in general, which seems to be happening?

TOPPING: I think that--I would also include the military. I think, for example, if in the course of a controversy or a conflict between Israelis and the Arabs that the Russians became too overt in their aid to the Arabs, that we might possibly take some kind of action, and action which, in the first instance, might be not be directed at open hostilities with the Soviet Union, but very easily through a miscalculation might lead to hostilities and a general war. And I think this is the great danger in the Middle East, and--

MARKEL: Of a possible clash between the United States and Russia?

TOPPING: Yes, I think there is a possibility, if the area remains turbulent, that a miscalculation of this kind could take place. I don't think either side wants it. The same danger, of course, exists, I think, in the Far East.

MARKEL: Do you agree with the foreign editor, Rick?

This is putting you in a tough spot. (Laughter.)

SMITH: I think one of the interesting aspects of the war in June was that the Russians and we were very careful to let each other know, through the hot line and through diplomatic channels--

NEWSMAN: Yes.

SMITH: --that we didn't want this to get out of bounds. But I think what you've suggested here, Top, is that you've got a tension between--

TOPPING: Right.

SMITH: --parallel interests between the two great powers and conflicting interests. We have a parallel interest in not having it explode in our faces, either we or the Russians--

TOPPING: That's right.

SMITH: --but they have an interest in keeping a certain level of turbulence that helps them extend their influence and we want to keep a cap on the area, and this is where the tension comes in--

TOPPING: That's right.

SMITH: --and this is where the danger is.

TOPPING: And that's where the danger--I think that's where the danger comes.

MARKEL: I must say, and not regretfully, I don't see any difference of opinion. This is a potential area of cold war, that this is really the important thing -- the area.

KING: Well, I think the Israelis fear this and in an indirect manner. I think that the Israelis are concerned that the United States may be so eager to hold the level of tension down that they will be--begin to apply the tremendous pressure that they do have against the Israelis to move towards some sort of a settlement which the Israelis would believe is nothing more than a papering over of the cracks and some sort of a dampening down of a fire that'll start up again at a later date.

MARKEL: Well, now, so much for the background of the tension, and now for the foreground. And we start with an attempt to present the viewpoint of the two sides, the Israeli side and the Arab side.

When I was in Israel recently, I had a conversation with Prime Minister Eshkol. I began by asking him what he saw as Israel's role in the Middle East.

(VIDEO: Prime Minister in his office at a desk with Mr. Markel.)

ESHKOL: Given peace -- well, we are doing--are working without, even when--where the peace is not so strong or so assured -- but given peace, we could be a bridge between Western culture, civilization, and the civilization of this part of the world: Asia and Africa. As you may well know, that we have today--you'll find in almost in all African countries and some of the Asian countries, you'll find our people instructing in the--people of these countries in agriculture, in irrigation, in cooperation, establishing cooperatives, in medicine.

MARKEL: Well, what do you see as the role of a small nation, such as Israel, in a world of big powers? Now, I noticed the other day--I think it was the Deputy Foreign Minister of Denmark who said -- and he was criticized for this -- he said a small nation has no role in this world except a minor role--affairs. Now, you have already told me that Israel is extending, as a small nation, extending its influence -- just as I believe, and I hope you will agree with me, that the British, even though they're a second-class power now--

ESHKOL: They became, yes.

MARKEL: --have a great role to play in the world, technologically and culturally.

ESHKOL: Yes, its thinking about much smaller nations than Britain -- or let's still call it Great Britain. I'm thinking about much smaller nations, like the Scandinavian nations, like Switzerland, or like Israel, with our dreams and our ambitions -- in the good sense, in the fine sense of the word, ambition. Great ideas, great inventions were mainly invented in the brains of one man. It doesn't need a big--a big, big nation for it. Of course, we might need big, big sums of money.

MARKEL: Ideas, that's the great thing in the world.

ESHKOL: Yes, ideas, cultural ideas, moral ideas, and, by the way, this is the place, this is the place where, speaking on the point of view of culture, moral, religion, in this small place of the world thousands of years ago was the monotheism--was born here in the heads of a band of a few, few people. Then the Judaism and the Moslem religion and the Christian, first Christian and then the Moslem -- so you see small places, small nations, individuals, they created grandiose things.

(VIDEO: Mr. Markel in the New York studio.)

MARKEL: Well, we then talked about the future of Israel and the possibility of reaching an accommodation with the Arab countries, and the Prime Minister began with a discussion of the basic problem, the problem of people.

(VIDEO: Mr. Eshkol as before.)

ESHKOL: Now, if you would tell me that Russia is going to open the doors and send you out a million Jews, I would--let's say, during three years, I wouldn't hesitate a minute, even as a Finance Minister. I was Finance Minister 10, 12 years. I wouldn't hesitate a minute. I would say, "By God, send them here! We'll find ways."

Then we have to strive to establish new plants, new factories. This is already a pioneering job we had to create because we have a goal. You have to--you want the people here. We dream--at least, my dream is to double our population in 20, 25 years, to double the population and to become a population of five million.

MARKEL: Does that mean you need more land to take care of them?

ESHKOL: It means mainly we need more industry--

MARKEL: Yes.

ESHKOL: -- because today a family, especially here, creates food for 12 or 15 families, so it's mainly industry and science-based industry.

MARKEL: To sum it up, what, Mr. Eshkol, do you consider the lessons that Israel has for the world?

ESHKOL: We proved, because we were told years ago, "What does Israel, a small country, provide? What can you do there?" And we said, "With love and devotion, that--the men, people make a country. People can convert a desert in a country, in a living country, and not vice versa. If you don't conquer the desert, the desert conquers the man."

MARKEL: Of course, Mr. Prime Minister, the big question in this whole area about which we've talked from the beginning is the question of peace. How hopeful are you that peace can be achieved here?

ESHKOL: To my mind, it's a question of time. I am very much hopeful that we will reach peace, and this is my, or our, ambition, to prove that peace can be reached among these peoples, because there is much in common, common interests, if these peoples will work together. And on a regional basis, where land is ample and water is abundant and people are--some countries lack people -- they need much more people and industry -- it's only the beginning of development, so I am hopeful that they will prove, in addition to what I have told that we have done until now, during these 20 years -- after all, it's not too much -- will prove that peace is possible to reach, and we'll do anything possible from our side to reach it.

MARKEL: Oh, you included a large 'if' in the question, or what seemed to me a large 'if' -- if there will be cooperation. How hopeful are you of that cooperation?

ESHKOL: Of course, for peace you need at least two parties.

MARKEL: Right. Yes, sir.

ESHKOL: How hopeful I am--of course, these days are not the best days to prophesy about the--to make prophecies about peace. But living here already a few decades -- I wouldn't like to discover my age (laughter) -- a few decades, and looking forward and understanding that people must come to senses, and they'll understand--they'll understand that instead of spending hundreds of millions, maybe almost billions, either dollars or pounds or the dinars, for tanks and planes -- and then it can be destroyed in six days or in three days -- instead of this -- and people, people, for instance, in Egypt are starving; really, it's a situation of starvation -- so they'll come to their senses and they'll one day say, "Now let's sit down together and discuss how to produce, how to create, and not how to destroy."

MARKEL: As said in Isaiah, who's often quoted by President Johnson--

ESHKOL: Yes. Yes.

MARKEL: "Let us sit down and take counsel together."

ESHKOL: Yes, sir. Yes.

MARKEL: So shall we end on that Biblical note?

ESHKOL: Very nice.

MARKEL: Thank you, sir.

ESHKOL: Thank you.

MARKEL: I feel that out of your conversation I get this

moral: in your own words, "If man does not conquer the desert, the desert will conquer man."

ESHKOL: Right.

MARKEL: And I thank you for that thought.

(Turn to next page.)

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BARRETT: Right.

MARKS: And I thank you for that thought.

(Turn to next page.)

(VIDEO: Mr. Markel and the correspondents again as before.)

MARKEL: Well, such is the picture as the Israelis see it. I talked also with a number of Arabs in Jordan and found their feeling almost unanimous and very bitter. Virtually all Arabs see the continued existence of Israel as a constant threat. The policy of bringing in as many Jews as possible, they believe, in the long run will reduce--will require that Israel expand its territory once again. The Arabs argue that the Balfour Declaration promised the Jews a "national home" in Palestine but did not contemplate the creation of an independent state. These Arabs profess sympathy for the Jews who have sought refuge from persecution in other lands, but they ask why was the Jewish homeland set up in their midst. Why was it not Canada or Latin America or even Texas?

(VIDEO: Cartoons from the Arab Press.)

This bitterness of the Arabs toward Israel is reflected in the cartoons that have appeared recently in the Arab press. "El Aram" of Cairo shows Israel perched precariously on the top of a time bomb, the bomb representing the Arab territories captured during the June war. "El Maha" of Lebanon continues to suggest close collusion between Israel and the United States. Of course that is General Dayan's eyepatch on the Statue of Liberty.

(VIDEO: Mr. Markel and the correspondents.)

Yet now King Hussein of Jordan is talking about the possibility of recognizing Israel's right "to live in peace and security," provided certain conditions are met. Whether the Arab leaders can damp down the feeling of hostility toward Israel in the Arab masses is a real issue. Let's begin then with a comment as to what the Arabs might say in reply. I have, as objectively as possible, made the case for the Arabs or made the Arab answer. Do you want to amplify that or correct me?

NEWSMAN: Well, I don't know whether either you or I are fit to be commentators on Mr. Fakhrol on behalf of the Arabs. There are two or three points he made in his interview which I think would be answered very quickly by Arabs, and I think I can guess pretty well how they might answer it. One, he talks about Israel possibly serving as a bridge between Europe and the underdeveloped world. Well, the Arab response to that I am sure would be something of a horselaugh, and they would be saying, "Well, actually what Israel is is an obstacle, not a bridge. We want to unify our part of the world."

Of course, there are plenty of problems within the Arab world, and among the Arabs themselves, to unification. Nonetheless, their line is that Israel is an obstacle to their unity, so how can it serve as a bridge between any part of the world and another part of the world? There are, however, I think probably some Arabs, particularly, say, Christians living in Lebanon or something like that, who would recognize that Israeli talents brought from the West might well be an advantage to the Arab

world, given a complete and overall settlement.

But I think far more important than that is his comment about the Russians: "If the Russians could send me a million more Jews. Send them right away. My dream is to expand the population of Israel to five million people." This is precisely what the Arabs are frightened about. "More people," they say, "means more land. More land," they say, "means less land for the Arabs, means trampling on the Arab rights," and that's what they say, to go all the way back to the Balfour Declaration, is what began back in 1917. That's what the shooting has been about ever since.

So this is the kind of thing that hits them right in the guts, and this is the gut issue, as far as they're concerned. And when they talk about a settlement and they say that Israel must meet their terms, their terms revolve about land and people. They want back as much of their territory as they can get and they don't spell it out in public how much. If they can, they can get the world committed to all of it, they'll take all of it. In private they somewhat hedge this and say, well, maybe they can only get part of it.

When it comes to people, they're talking about Palestinian refugees, now numbering something like a million and a half. And they want these people, according to the words of UN resolutions, either repatriated or compensated for their lost land. These are the gut issues as far as the Arabs are concerned.

MARKEL: Well, thank you. I think you've done as well as Colonel Nasser himself. (Laughter.)

NEWSMAN: I doubt that.

NEWSMAN: He's an objective reporter for the New York Times.

MARKEL: No, he's saying-- that's what he's done. He's presented their case extremely well and I fail--I apologize but I did my best. I would like to talk--Rick, you've been at Cairo. You've been in the United Arab Republic a long time. I'd like to talk about the Arab mind a bit. This is what fascinated me most. One Arab who is objective, who said, "Consider the word, Arabesque," which is the definition, I guess, is a design made up of various strands. And he said, "The Arab mind is like this. They have five strands at one time. And they can think about five different things at once and each one contradicting the other." Is there in your experience any justification for this description?

SMITH: Well, I think what you're suggesting in terms of the contradiction is that the Arabs seem to do things, at least from the outsider's point of view, which run directly

counter to their own interests. And this is where we see the contradictions. I have five strands. It could be a hundred. It could only be two. But they have a number of concepts which are very difficult for us to grasp. One of them is the whole notion of the hero. Samson, to us, is a tragic figure. He brings down the temple on his own head, destroys himself as well as other people, but Samson--

NEWSMAN: You mean like shooting a destroyer out of the water and seeing the Suez refineries go up in flames.

SMITH: You've got the parallel. He is a hero to them because he has stood proudly for what he believed in, regardless of the consequences. And there's a kind of regardless-of-the-consequences element to Arab thinking.

MARKEL: There's something to that point of view, isn't there?

SMITH: (He laughed.) Well, not from our point of view. We're pragmatic, common-sense type people and we don't see that. If you knock off an Israeli destroyer, you're going to lose a refinery and that costs more. I wonder--

MARKEL: I'm reminded -- Rick, may I interrupt -- by what you say. Somebody once said, "Logic is a systematic way of going wrong with confidence." (Laughter.) The Arabs might cite that against this. Go ahead.

SMITH: Well, King Hussein himself is a good example of an Arab hero. Here is a man who stands up publicly and says, "The war last June didn't make any sense. I didn't want to get into it. But I'm an Arab and I had to." And he is regarded today generally as a hero in the Arab world. He did the right thing even though it cost him half his country. And other Arabs respect him. I was in the Arab world during and after the war and there was tremendous respect. King Hussein's prestige had never been higher. And yet here is-- in a western country, this would have been a disaster. The government probably would have fallen and there would have been elections or a coup or something like that.

TOPPING: Well, Rick, don't think that after the shock of the Israeli war -- war with the Israelis and the defeat of the Arabs -- don't you think that there are some indications that the Arabs are moving toward a more pragmatic position? We're getting that not only from Hussein but a lot of dispatches, for example, from Cairo. They're talking about acceptance of Israel. You don't get it from Nasser, perhaps, but you get it in the columns of "Al Ahras" with Heikel telling us that we have to be more realistic in the appraisal of our own strength and in our attitudes toward Israel, and so on. Is this just a very small group or--?

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TOPPING: Well, look, don't think that after the book of the Israeli war -- war with the Israelis and the defeat of the Arabs -- don't you think that there are some indications that the Arabs are moving toward a more pragmatic position? We're getting that not only from Hussein but a lot of dispatches, for example, from Cairo. They're talking about acceptance of Israel. You don't get it from Messer, perhaps, but you get it in the columns of "Al Anwar" with Hekkel telling us that we have to be more realistic in the appraisal of our own strength and in our attitudes toward Israel, and so on. Is this just a very small group or--?

SMITH: No, I don't think it's--well, I think it is small in terms of the Arab mass, but then I don't think that the Arab mass necessarily is going to be determining here. It's always got to be taken into account, but it may not be determining. No, I think that there is evident, as you look back over the weeks from the war and a couple of months ago and now--I think there is a sobering-up process going on but there is also--this is another one of those strands that Mr. Markel was talking about earlier. You've got these things working against each other and when you're dealing with Arabs you can't be sure which one is on top or whether or not one is going to be a continuing strand.

MARKEL: Top, could I complete this, to me, very interesting examination of the Arab mind. What does this characteristic, this arabesque characteristic of the Arabs, mean in terms of the possibility of a settlement?

TOPPING: Well, it means there's going to be a constant ebb and flow between various elements, it seems to me, of their mind and of the way they appraise the situation. So that you aren't going to move in a neat progression towards any settlement. It's always constantly going to be in the balance as to whether or not you can make a settlement or whether or not you veer off in exactly the opposite direction and you wind up with another blowup. And one of the things you have to watch very carefully is the kinds of things the Arabs are saying to each other, because words in the Arab world have tremendous power. There is at times almost a confusion of the word with reality, and the Arabs, when Nasser used to get up and talk about driving Israel into the sea, psychologically millions of Arabs believed it was going on at that time. It's a susceptibility to the demagogue, which is far beyond what we have. We all have this to a certain extent.

KING: Are you suggesting the Israelis should send their poets to negotiate with the Arabs instead of their politicians and soldiers? (Laughter.)

MARKEL: Philosophers.

TOPPING: I wouldn't think it would be a mistake to have poets and philosophers in the delegation. I think you've got a point there.

SMITH: But back to what Top suggested about the sobering up and the columns, one of the most important things, even when the Arabs are not coming forward necessarily with specific terms that the Israelis are going to buy, the mere fact that the public tone of Heikel's articles and of what King Hussein is saying is changing is part of the preparation for the Arab people for a possible settlement. I'm not saying it's going to happen, but this is a necessary prelude to it, and I think it is significant that it's going on.

MARKEL: Well, Jerry, you've served in Israel for a long time. What about the Israeli characteristic? I discovered there was a great spirit of nationalism and I was told a story, an anecdote, that reveals this very clearly about Ben Gurion -- about a Frenchman who came to him and said--they were having a dispute and the Frenchman said, "Look, I'm first a Socialist, I'm second a Frenchman and I'm third a Jew." And Ben Gurion said, "Sir, in this country we read from right to left." (Laughter.) Now, what about this spirit of nationalism?

KING: Well, I think it is intense and it is partly-- is inflamed by survival. The Israelis know--they can look around themselves and before the five-day war occurred, six-day war occurred, they knew how much land they had, they knew how many people were around them, and they knew what the Arab attitude toward them was. I think that this is something that you have to keep in mind whenever you start to talk about all of the possibilities, the technicalities, the various diplomatic ploys that may be made in this matter, is that Israel's primary concern has got to be survival. And so far there has been nothing--I think that the Israelis believe that they have seen nothing from the Arab world, either before or after the June war, that indicated the Arabs were prepared to accept the fact that Israel is there to stay. Until you find that, then I think that a lot of what is going on, has been going on in recent days, is simply maneuvering, and we'll wait to see whether--you're going to come back to all of these things that sound reasonable enough until they come up against the Arab--I mean the Israeli premise that: Is this going to lead to permanent peace, and are we going to be accepted? Because this question of acceptability is paramount to them.

You hear Mr. Eshkol talking about doubling his population and doubling his industrial capacity. Well, now, this is going to hinge, and one of the things that has stalled the Israelis in their own internal development has been the fact that they don't have any ready markets around them for these industrial goods that they're trying so desperately to make. And until this acceptability comes and it's in the form of permanent peace, then I don't think you're going to find the debatable points that the United Nations can bring up are going to have any effect on Israel.

MARKEL: All right, we've sketched in the background of the conflict, and let's now plunge directly into the question of the chances of its resolution. And, of course, the crux of the matter, it seems to me, is the occupation of the Arab territory. Mr. King, let's have some of the background here, please.

KING: All right. As a result of the six-day war, the Israelis have quadrupled the area they occupy, and in the newly

occupied lands there are a million and a quarter hostile Arabs. These factors pose severe problems for them. And the occupied areas taken from Jordan are Old Jerusalem, which has been a symbol of Israel's frustration over a divided capital, and the west bank of the Jordan River, which has been a base for border raids. Now, the regions seized from Syria is the high ground, the Golan heights from which the enemy had bombarded Israel's northern regions and sparked the conflict over the Jordan River waters. From Egypt, Israel captured the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula. Gaza was a staging area for attacks. Control of the Sinai will mean control both of the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba, Israel's outlet to the Red Sea.

Now, there is involved in this issue of the occupied areas the question of security, guarding the borders from Arab retaliation or of insuring free passage of Israeli ships, as at the Suez Canal. There's also involved a large question of the Arab population. If the Arabs in the occupied areas are added to those of Israel, their total is almost a million and a half, some 37 per cent of the population of Israel proper. Now, this imbalance creates grave problems for control and assimilation.

And so the conflict stands. Unless Israel with its two and a half million population can reach some sort of an accommodation with the hundred million Arabs in the area, there is no likelihood of a peace for a long time to come.

MARKEL: Yes, sir, thank you. And now before we discuss the possibility of an agreement, I think we ought to talk about the pressures on both sides. Now, what are the pressures on the Arabs? You've indicated, Rick, that there is the economy in Egypt, there is the revenue loss from the Canal, they've had, as I understand it, a bad cotton crop, tourist trade has collapsed, at the destruction of Suez they lost most of their oil refining capacity. Isn't the pressure very great on them to reach some sort of settlement?

SMITH: Well, I think the economic pressures are significant, but less significant than the psychological pressures of having an enemy on your territory and wanting to regain as much of your territory, if not all of it, as you can. The Arab leader can't turn and look to his people and say, "I'm an effective leader of your country," if an enemy which he has long claimed is much smaller and would be submerged in the Arab sea is sitting on a fairly large chunk of Arab real estate. I think this is where the real pressure is. It's certainly the primary pressure on King Hussein and I think it's also a pressure on Nasser.

The Canal, the loss of the Canal revenues, are important for President Nasser, this is true. But he has gotten an agree-

ment which will tide him over for some months, an agreement from the other Arabs, the oil-rich Arab states, to provide him with \$266,000,000 a year in flat-out support, and this is about 30 or 40 million dollars more than the Canal revenues. It also depends on how much the Russians are prepared to underwrite the Egyptian economy. The Russians have provided wheat shipments on a couple of occasions since the war and they were doing it on a few occasions before the war. How long they'll do it and to what extent they'll do it is a very difficult question, but he can string along for a while economically.

And then I think there's one other point to be made on the economy, and that is if you think of Indonesia and other countries in the underdeveloped world, there is a capacity for endurance at a fairly low living standard which far exceeds the expectations of Westerners, and we tend to look at gross national product and foreign exchange and balance of trade and this sort of thing and say that 'the economy is busted, the government's bound to collapse and they've got to come to terms.' But it just doesn't work that way in the underdeveloped world. They are used to so much less that there's an awful lot of give. And after all, most of the people in Egypt are fellahin, are peasants. They aren't living any differently today from the way they lived before the war, or really from the way they lived hundreds of years ago -- well, somewhat, but not a great deal.

MARKEL: You have indicated, if I have not misunderstood you, that the economic pressure is not so great as the psychological.

SMITH: Yes, I say so.

MARKEL: Well, does this mean that in order to regain their psychological balance they're going to try another round if the Israelis don't give in?

SMITH: Well, there are certainly pressures to that effect in the Arab world today. This is what the Syrians and the Algerians are advocating and this is the cleavage between them and the rest -- and particularly, when I say the rest, I mean particularly King Hussein and President Nasser. There is this conflict within the Arab world now, and this is precisely what King Hussein says when he comes here. He says, "You know, if you don't encourage me, if you don't help me, we'll all slip the other way and we'll start this long Vietnam-style guerrilla war that the Syrians already advocate."

MARKEL: Well, before we discuss the pressures on the Israelis, let's complete the question of pressures on the Arabs. Now let's talk about Jordan. You've been seeing quite a bit of the King, I gather, in person or otherwise. What exactly is he saying?

SMITH: Well, the King has spelled out publicly and privately three points that he says are Arab concessions or Arab moves towards the peace settlement, and they are these: first, that the Arabs are prepared to recognize Israel's right to live in peace and security; second of all, that they are prepared to end the state of war with Israel; and third, that the Arabs are prepared to grant free maritime passage to the Israelis--

MARKEL: On certain conditions.

SMITH: Oh, yes. Yes, quite clearly on certain conditions--

MARKEL: Right.

SMITH: --the conditions I mentioned before, land and people, that is, that something be done about the refugees -- and he's very vague about that, not clear -- and that Israel withdraw from the territory she captured last June.

Privately he hints and indicates that he really doesn't expect a full withdrawal by the Israelis, but publicly the Arab position is the Israelis have got to pull back entirely. And, of course, the most difficult problem there is what's to be done about Jerusalem. He says it's intolerable for Jerusalem to remain in Israeli hands, and as Jerry suggested earlier, the Israelis give every evidence of having annexed it, regardless of what they call it. So here you have a real tough point.

He--there is still a considerable gap between what Hussein is offering as the most moderate Arab position and what the Israelis want. The Israelis want direct peace talks; he says no, "not as long as they're on our territory."

MARKEL: Well, is he speaking as he alleged recently, for Egypt also, do you think?

SMITH: Well, I think in mood, yes, but when you get down to the specifics -- and the most difficult specific for the Egyptians is the Suez Canal -- then I question whether or not King Hussein can do the bargaining for President Nasser. I wouldn't have thought anybody else but Nasser could do it.

MARKEL: You mean they agree about the conditions you describe but not about the three points of concession.

SMITH: No, I--no, I would say that in general, from my impression of what diplomats say, the Egyptians have been saying privately and so forth, that there is general agreement on the three points, but it's when you get down to defining those and putting them into language and saying, "Well, all right, now on what day can an Israeli ship bearing an Israeli

flag go through the Suez Canal?" that Nasser begins--or the Egyptians begin to talk about wanting an International Court decision as an umbrella to explain it away for the other Arabs why they reversed themselves; or else they say that they want a resolution of the refugee question.

Well, now, what does--what do they mean by a resolution of the refugee question? They haven't spelled it out. Maybe Hussein's definition is different from Nasser's. That's what I mean.

MARKEL: Well, Jerry, I'm going to come to you about the Israeli position, but before that, to sum up the Arab thing, Top, I'd like to ask you whether you don't think there's a grave question as to whether the propaganda, which has gone on for years and years by the Arab leaders with the Arab peoples, can be defused? In other words, I'm asking whether a moderate like Hussein, and Nasser if he becomes a moderate, is not in actual physical danger, in view of what Rick has as the psychological mood of the Arab peoples.

TOPPING: I would guess so. We've seen again and again what happens in Arab countries when the leader becomes unpopular and what the mob in the marketplace can do. I suppose that at the moment one of the reasons why Hussein is speaking as he is in this country, to some extent for Nasser, is simply that Nasser doesn't feel that he can safely say some of these things in the present situation in Cairo, which I understand is extremely delicate. He's under a certain amount of threat and pressure from various groups and he has to maintain some sort of a delicate balance there. And it might very well be that if he were to come out directly and boldly and say some of the things that he feels, apparently feels, that must be said and done in order to achieve a peace with the Israelis, that he might be possibly dragged down.

I would say that certainly anyone who would attempt to take a moderate line today in Syria and possibly in Iraq might be--very well might be in trouble. I think Algeria, although Algeria is a very militant country at the moment, I think that a person there taking--a leader there taking a moderate line possibly would not be so much in trouble, because I think that there the leadership is more separated from the population than possibly in these other Arab countries.

SMITH: Well, King Hussein's own grandfather is an example of what can happen.

MARKEL: Yes, right.

SMITH: He was assassinated for having collaborated, as the Arabs put it, with the Israelis. So that Hussein is

walking a very, very delicate line, and this in part, I think, accounts for what seemed to be conflicting elements in some of his speeches and public utterances. He's trying to move--as I see it, he's trying to move towards moderation and towards accommodation, but he's also trying to protect himself so that he's there to do whatever is going to be done three or four months from now.

MARKEL: Well, Jerry, now let's talk about the pressures on Israel for some sort of settlement. They may have secure frontiers but they certainly have an insecure population, and how much 'give' do you think in the long run they're likely to provide in this situation? I assume at the moment we're really engaged in a kind of poker game and you can't believe everything you read about the demands on both sides. Well, what are the pressures and what is the mood about some kind of reconciliation?

(Turn to next page.)

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MARKET: Well, Jerry, now let's talk about the pressures on Israel for some sort of settlement. They may have some frontiers but they certainly have an immense population, and how much 'give' do you think in the long run they're likely to provide in this situation? I assume at the moment we're really engaged in a kind of poker game and you can't believe everything you read about the demands on both sides. Well, what are the pressures and what is the mood about some kind of reconciliation?

(Turn to next page.)

KING: Well, you start off with this by--you will remind yourself that this is the Middle East where people enjoy haggling. (Laughter.) You never start--you wouldn't think of coming out and telling--giving somebody the price you really intend to pay for something. So this is like a labor negotiation. You're starting from two very widely separated poles and then have to start coming together. The Israelis have been deliberately vague about just exactly what they would settle for. In talking to Israeli leaders and spokesmen in their various departments you always come back to one premise that they put out to you. They say, if we can see permanent peace, you would be surprised about what we could do. Now this may be only their propaganda. I'm not sure. But they are at least--this is what they keep clinging to.

I think that just on playing hard geo-politics there are several parts in which they have a good deal of give. They have no interest in the Sinai Peninsula, I think. They--

MARKEL: What about the Canal?

KING: Well, the Canal--I'm saying this--I was just about to say that their only interest in it is the use of the Canal. Now if they are entitled to use the canal, they don't want Israeli soldiers out there in the desert. I'm sure that--I believe anyway, that they would probably give up this modest oil field that they captured from the Egyptians in Southern Sinai in turn for some recognized acceptance of peace treaty. Peace treaty; this is what they're after really. As far as the Syrian area is concerned, what they--the primary element that this land that they have captured is largely worthless. It is a military zone. Their real interest up there is in getting the area demilitarized so that the Syrians could not again come back with war material and fire into their area.

The Gaza Strip and the west bank, including the city of Jerusalem: there you get into a much greater problem because this is where the refugees are. You not only have a piece of territory to settle for but you have a large population that has to be managed. The people on the west bank, excluding the city of Jerusalem, are in a--I think the Israelis themselves say that they were surprised to find that things were better there than they had expected. Over half of the seven hundred thousand people that live there, outside the city of Jerusalem, are farmers. They take care of themselves. They always have.

The Israelis did see that a certain amount of normal commerce took place between the east and the west banks during this occupation period, which was vital. The Gaza Strip is another great problem. As long as the United Nations continues to send food supplies in there, the people will make it some way. These are tiny contributions in--by our standards but they were enough to keep those people alive. So that these pressures--the economic pressures on Israel in holding this ground are relatively small and easy.

MARKEL: Well, what about the population?

KING: Well, the population is a big matter now. This-- if you look at it in the short run -- forget about the long run -- as to whether--I mean this is a Jewish state. It's a Zionist state. It was conceived as a homeland for the Jews. I think that in moments of great honesty this is all that is wanted in Israel. They have a problem with the Arabs. Now if large-scale guerrilla activity is to begin, as the Syrians and the Algerians suggest, you have a situation of potential difficulty and unrest for Israel.

But on the other hand, the Israelis this time--this trouble that's coming--if there is going to be a retaliation raid, it's not very far to Damascus. It's certainly not very far to Amman. In retaliation this time, if this guerrilla warfare is kept up, the price that the Arabs are going to pay to continue it will be a lot higher than it ever has been before. I think the Israelis believe, and this has been said of the Arabs too --I'm sure Rick has heard this plenty of times -- that time is on their side. And they are convinced that they are, at the moment, able to hold what they have while they wait for a bargain and a settlement.

MARKEL: Now before we come to the conclusion. The UN is seized of the problem again. Is there, Top, any possibility that the UN can take any effective action in this area?

TOPPING: I'm not very hopeful about any kind of a settlement through the UN. I think, as always the UN is a--provides a forum to take the heat off the situation, and perhaps the UN can contribute to maintaining for a time the status quo, such as it exists, a de facto cease-fire. But I don't see that there is much chance within the framework of the UN, considering how far apart, in reality, the two sides are, of the UN bringing about any kind of a real lasting settlement, certainly not in the next months.

MARKEL: Well, they can issue after there is firing--they can issue a denunciation. It's a very difficult--the only value of the UN could have, I think, is that-- this matter is really in the hands of the two big powers. If the two big powers can get together at the UN, it may provide some way, some road toward a solution. But there doesn't seem to be any immediate possibility of that.

I would like to end the question--end the discussion by putting to each of you this tough question. Each give me a one-sentence answer or such. Jerry, what's your bet on a settlement in the near future?

KING: Not in the near future.

MARKEL: What does the near future include?

KING: Well, I think you'd be very optimistic if you had good talks going inside of a year.

MARKEL: Rick?

SMITH: I'll go along with that. I think because the problem is so emotional that the hopes of any permanent lasting settlement are very slim indeed. They're better now than they were three months ago.

MARKEL: But not too good. And you?

TOPPING: I agree. I don't think there's much chance of a settlement. I think the problem is doing everything possible to avoid a further broadening of the conflict within the next months.

MARKEL: And that depends, I would say, on considerable-- in considerable degree on what part the Russians play in all of this, because our foreign policy is really being made, in large part, by the Russians. In any case there are now the first, even though faint, signs that there may be a move toward some kind of accommodation even though we're not very hopeful. And the Arabs and the Israelis disagree in most things but in their proverbs there seems to be some agreement. As examples there are these Arab sayings: "There is regret in haste, safety in deliberation. Patience destroys mountains. Do not regret what has passed and do not rejoice over what has yet come."

And there are these Israeli sayings: "Patience gives peace, haste regret. Who rushes in is often late. To regret nothing is the beginning of all wisdom. Patience and fortitude." In three weeks we shall, as usual, review the events of the month with the usual -- unusual? -- trio of Wicker, Frankel, and Markel. We trust, as always, that you will be with us.

ANNOUNCER: News in Perspective: Special Report on the Middle East has been presented by the National Educational Television Network and the New York Times, with Lester Markel, Seymour Topping, Seth King, and Hedrick Smith. Tune in next time when News in Perspective will present its regular Review of the News of the Month with Lester Markel, Tom Wicker, and Max Frankel.

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