

ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE MR. LEVI  
EESHKOL AT THE UNITED JEWISH APPEAL STUDY MISSION:

Jerusalem

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Mr. Chairmen, my very dear friends,

Only a few months ago, I had the pleasure of seeing many of you during my visit to the United States. I am delighted to be host to you tonight on my own home grounds. The visit, on the invitation of your great President, strengthened the traditional bonds of friendship between the United States and Israel. I am grateful for the personal links that have been created with the President and his associates.

One of the important consequences of the visit was the agreement to embark on a joint study of ways of implementing President Johnson's imaginative proposal for U.S. - Israel co-operation in desalting sea water. We appointed a joint team of experts who have just submitted their report.

We are now that much closer to an important turning-point in history - the supplying of sweet water from the sea to bring life-giving water to a land parched for centuries: water to enable human habitation, to make the soil fruitful and make possible the pursuit of agriculture and industry. This may very well be one of the great moments in the technological revolution: a pioneering moment which Israel is happy to share with the United States and President Johnson's enlightened vision. As the President and I stated in our joint communique, the results of this effort will be made available to all countries.

During the few months which have passed since we last met, I also had the privilege of visiting France and meeting the illustrious President and other leaders of that country.

Side by side with the further deepening of our ties with the U.S. and France, Israel's net-work of relations with countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, is constantly expanding. Israeli technicians are now working in over 50 countries in these continents. Since the beginning of our technical co-operation programme, some 4,000 trainees from these continents have studied in Israel. Technical activities now extend to ten countries in Latin America.

The Arab boycott has not had any tangible success of late. Israel's water programme is being implemented in an atmosphere of international understanding, despite a large scale Arab propaganda campaign which involved visits of Arab representatives to 60 world capitals.

On the broad international scene then, there is constant progress. At the same time, we dare not ignore the disturbing signs in the Middle East. During this year, two Arab summit conferences have taken place, one in January and one a few weeks ago. In both these conferences, plans were evolved for an ultimate attack against Israel.

Colonel Nasser, in so-called moderate language, speaks of the time such a strike should, in the Arab view, become feasible from the stand-point of the arms situation and regional and international development.

These conferences have provided an impetus for renewed Nasserist attempts to extend Egyptian hegemony over the Arab countries - all this being presented as a necessary prelude to the attack against Israel.

Arab propaganda is becoming more intensive and President Nasser will go to any length to create the impression that his policy vis-a-vis Israel is supported by other countries outside the Arab block.

Arab spokesmen are claiming that such support was forthcoming at the recent conference of non-aligned nations in Cairo. We have reason to believe that the resolution on Israel at this conference, does not reflect the true attitude of the non-Arab participants towards Israel.

The fact remains, President Nasser is steadily building up his military potential and war machine. During the coming months and years, we shall require increased vigilance in face of clear-cut Arab plans to step up aggression in every field.

There are two voices in Cairo - the one of spurious moderation, directed to the Western visitors - the other of threats, hostility and the arms build-up. In this situation, we must maintain our deterrent military capacity, which is the central factor preventing war in the area. We must explain to the world, that silence in the face of daily violation of the Charter of the U.N., is interpreted in Arab capitals as a sanction for aggression. It is against the background of Colonel Nasser's strengthening of his war machine that the Knesset has had to review an urgent problem - and not for the first time - I refer to the dangerous work of German scientists in Egypt. These men of science have hired out their talent and brains to the Nasser war machine. They are building missiles for Egypt; and who can tell on what other projects they are engaged?

The mere thought of a combination of blind Arab hatred and the death-dealing efficiency of the Hitler period is one to give pause to any man. How much more so to a people which has engraved on its collective and individual consciousness the memories of the holocaust which defies description.

I regret that the West German Government has not yet found the means to carry out its declarations to prevent the harnessing of German efficiency to Arab intransigence. Israel, and I dare say, the entire Jewish people will carefully follow the actions of West Germany to take effective and decisive steps to eliminate this threat.

Our deepest desire and consistent policy has been to work for the mutually agreed disarmament in this region under inspection. We desire this sincerely, just as we reject the use of force, or the threat of force, to settle border disputes between nations.

## Jewish Solidarity

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is for all these reasons that the Jewish partnership you embody is so important to us. The knowledge that millions of Jewish hearts beat in unison with us, out of a sense of common history and common destiny, lends us courage and strength.

The American Jewish community gave expression to this feeling of Jewish solidarity from its earliest days. The creation, fifty years ago, of the Joint Distribution Commission was, in effect, proof of this solidarity. The dedicated founders of the J.D.C., men like Warburg, Lehman, Baerwald, Rosenwald, Adler, Asch, Berlin, Marshall, Schiff, and many others, told the world: "If a Jew is struck anywhere, we share his pain: if a Jew suffers anywhere, it is our united resolve to alleviate his suffering.

Let me share with you some personal recollections of the Joint. In the early days of World War I - (I mention this, even though it reveals years) - I was a day labourer in the orchards of Petah Tikvah. For some reason, my good friend Harzfeld and I were forced by our comrades to serve on the Merkaz Haklai - the Executive of the Agricultural Labour Union. The Turks, under Jamal Pasha, were expelling Jews from their homes in Palestine and there was much dislocation, terrible suffering and hunger haunted the land and people. Harzfeld and I were then responsible for the lives of thousands of young people in our new settlements.

The U.S. Ambassador, the late Henry Morgenthau, reported on the situation to Washington and American Jewry acted. I remember clearly the thrill which crossed the country when we heard that the Jews of America, through the J.D.C., were sending food on the U.S.S. Vulcan, for the starving Jews of Palestine. This was an actual snatching from the jaws of death of people doomed to starvation.

Later, Harzfeld and another shalich were sent to Damascus to rescue exiled Jews from the Turkish prisons and camps. They were in grave danger of starvation, disease and death. Harzfeld and others worked day and night, encouraged in the knowledge that American Jewry was behind them. J.D.C. funds saved the fledgling Jewish population from decimation. Harzfeld, using false papers and an assumed name, was himself arrested and only the strongest intervention succeeded to release him.

These acts of brotherhood were forerunners of the partnership to be welded between the U.S. Jewish community and Palestinian Jewry in the darker days ahead.

I have many personal memories of the J.D.C. and the electric meaning of the word "Joint" from my own rescue work in Germany before the Second World War. We all know how it became a symbol of hope during, and immediately after, the tragic bleak days of Nazism in Europe.

Who will forget those days of tragedy and the unceasing efforts of J.D.C. and its representatives? Secret couriers went from Switzerland to occupied lands on missions of rescue. Planes dropped food ..4

and money behind Nazi lines. Dangerous secret contacts and negotiations were conducted - daring missions undertaken.

After the War, came the dramatic and heart-breaking confrontation with the remnants of European Jewry: the feverish work of Joint, of Palestinians both within and outside of the Jewish Brigade, the supplying of food to D.P. Camps; food for the body and for the soul as well; the illegal transports from area to area within occupied Europe; the co-operation with our boys and girls to get Jews out of Europe, in any way, on any ship, on all the secret roads and sea lanes. Though called "illegal", it was moral, it was great Jewish idealism, and its legality was as old as the Divine promise to Abraham. The daring of our volunteers and the enlightened dedication of J.D.C. leadership, wrote unforgettable human drama and saved hundreds of thousands from Europe's despair.

#### J.D.C. - and U.J.A.

The demographic map of the Jewish people has changed unalterably in this half century. To an overwhelming extent, the American Jewish community, through the Joint, and that great instrument of Jewish solidarity, the U.J.A., helped re-make the map and helped rehabilitate and re-build our people.

Israelis are usually sparing of praise - not only for one another but also, unfortunately, for our friends abroad. Yet, tonight I would like to pay tribute to the founders and leaders of the Joint and to the heads and dedicated army of workers of the U.J.A.

During this year; we, in Israel, are holding special public gatherings and festivities to celebrate the year of the Ha'apelah - to recall the courage and determination of those who organized the so-called illegal immigration to Israel.

It is only proper that we single out our friends in the United States, who did so much to keep the spark of Jewish hope burning in Europe after the Second World War. The statement by the speaker of our Knesset, the presentation of the Medallions to you tonight - and to Joe Schwartz last month, truly indicate the feelings of the entire people of Israel. We salute you, Eddie and Joe Meyerhoff - Herb and Moe Leavitt, and all our friends and co-workers here and in the U.S.

#### Tomorrow's Test

The great moments of yesterday are, my friends, but preludes for the stern tests of tomorrow. The State of Israel has wrought a revolution in Jewish life: it has proved that we are no longer mere spectators of history - but that we can refashion our own history.

The past makes its demands on us. The present demands us to act. The future awaits us. What kind of Israel, renewing itself, regathering the exiled, rebuilding the land, reviving the culture: what kind of Israel shall we, the Jewish people, create?

We cannot survive in the Middle East as a nation half-developed and half-backward. We cannot lag behind the great technological leap-forward which is taking place throughout the world. We cannot

let the spread of enlightenment and culture, or the advance of science, pass us by. As the people of the Book, we have our historical reputation, our spiritual and cultural heritage, to spur us on. As the people of Israel, we have the need for survival to goad us forward.

It is in this context that we welcome the decision to create the Israel Education Fund, to build schools and widen education facilities. This is not merely a debt that you owe to the many tens of thousands of children in those families whom you helped bring from oppression to freedom. It is not only a debt of honour to the young children - to the Moshelech and Slomelech - with hope and trust in their eyes, who stepped off the gang-plank in Haifa or Lydda. It is a debt to the Jewish tomorrow.

I believe, that the founding of the Israel Education Fund will one day be celebrated with all the solemnity and sense of tribute that we paid to the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the U.J.A., and to the 50th Anniversary of the creation of the J.D.C.

Immigration - the redeeming and rescue of Jews, absorption, housing, settlement - these are the basic and vital aims of the U.J.A. Together with the new effort for education, it makes the U.J.A.'s role one of overwhelming and decisive importance. Many hundreds of millions of gift-dollars will yet need to be spent to bring Jews to this country. We shall grow by over half-a-million by 1970. You know from where our fellow-Jews will come, arriving with hardly more than they can carry. By dint of our drive to industrialize, they will be absorbed in our cities and towns. The empty stretches of the Galilee and Negev await them, and the villages across the length and breadth of the Land. By then, perhaps even the sweetened water of the salt seas will be available to sustain them.

My friends, I hope that your Mission of study has helped you to penetrate the surface progress - and dare I say, so-called prosperity as evidenced around our luxury hotels and in certain areas of our big cities.

You have seen that more than half of the land is not settled and cries out for development and habitation. True, there is a group - which lives at a high standard and even makes money.

But this group is relatively small. You should bear in mind that tens of thousands of families live on sub-standard levels, as you who follow Malben's work realize. The vast majority of us live modest simple lives.

The luxury hotels are not an aim in themselves. They are an important means of production, to a country which must see in tourism a basic industry.

#### Conclusion

My dear friends, we cannot but be concerned as to what the future will bring us by the time we reach three million. We see our enemies converging in summits and in other conferences, devising ways to attack and destroy us, as if this depended only on their will. We must be strong - and strength is people and quality!

Looking a few years ahead, we must begin to think carefully of our need for more immigrants who come equipped with skills, know-how and the traditions of democratic life. Such young men and women will strengthen us in numbers, in our economic life, and in our cultural development. We are hopeful that such young people will join us from the developed countries of the West, including the United States. We hope that the communities will help us plan and carry this out.

These young men and women will be the back-bone of our fourth million - just as the Second Aliyah provided the structure on which the sinews of mass immigration waves were later built.

My friends, it is common-place to say that the world we live in today is on the move - is one of constant change. Last week was perhaps an outstanding example: China's atomic device, Russia's space vehicle, the change in the Government and party leadership in the Soviet Union; the new Prime Minister in Britain.

We cannot rest on our laurels in such a world. Constant efforts are demanded of us and ceaseless work, to grow, progress, and become strong in numbers, in material ways, in science, in morale and in the realm of the spirit.

My friends, I believe that you leave Israel with your sense of purpose re-invigorated, and your feeling of Jewish solidarity deepened. We would like you to know that your presence here always lends us courage and restates our brotherhood. When Arab summits convene, it is good to know that we are part of the large Jewish world, possessing such great cultural, economic and political strength. Let us continue together in the re-fashioning of Jewish history and the building of Israel in freedom, honour and dignity. Thank you.