HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE FOREIGN PRESS ASSOCIATION IN TEL AVIV, FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 1965, WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE, MR. LEVI ESHKOL

(Note: This is not a stenographic report).

x Regarding the possible diversion of the Jordan headwaters:

"Any attempt to prevent Israel from its just share of the Jordan River System in accordance with the Unified Water Plan will be considered as if it were an encroachment on our borders."

x Regarding President Johnson's statement that U.S. aid should not be used by countries for foreign military adventures:

"This is a wise and just statement. We always favour aid to developing countries to help build their economies and provide food for their people. Western countries are entitled to know that all the aid they give is used first and foremost to help the countries concerned."

x Regarding a possible meeting with Chancellor Erhard:

"This is in the offing. At such a meeting, we may discuss various problems of mutual interest. I cannot enter into details before the meeting."

x Regarding the possibility for a fair hearing for Israel at the U.N.:

"You have a strong point there... Yet I believe that at the Security Council discussions of the Almagor and Tel Dan incidents, there has been a growing understanding of our positions by the majority of members of the Council."

x Regarding the U.S. assurances to come to Israel's aid in case of attack:

"I believe the U.S. is sincere in its assurances, and that these are of great significance."

* Whether the desalting project reduces the importance of the Jordan Water scheme:

"We have until now developed less than half our land area. In the next 25 years, we shall double our population to 5 million. With more people we shall need more water... much more than the first stage of desalting can give us. We shall need every drop that nature has given us and much more. Every drop is precious... Desalting does not interfere or compensate for this..."

* Regarding the Arab boycott:

"The number of governments which have publicly condemned the Arab boycott is growing. In order to put an end to Arab blackmail, governmental declarations must be accompanied by concrete measures. I am thinking for instance of clear prohibitions by Ministries of Trade to Chambers of Commerce prohibiting them from attaching their signatures to discriminatory anti-Israel clauses in business documents demanded by Arab States; advising members of Chambers of Commerce to ignore threats from Arab boycott; of governmental assurances that companies penalized by Arab countries for not giving in to Arab blackmail will be given full support and governmental defence of their interests.

"One would think that the Arab governments should start thinking of winding up the costly boycott operation and spend this money on feeding and educating their populations.

"However, friendly governments and parliaments could accelerate the end of the boycott activities by adopting legal measures to outlaw the Arab boycott once and for all."

* Regarding possibilities that Israel is moving towards "a military showdown" with the Arabs on Arab intentions re: the Jordan River:

"It depends on how they will try to implement their decisions. (Asked a supplementary question, "Do you believe they will implement them," Mr. Eshkol replied: "I believe they will not!")

* Regarding border incidents with Jordan and Syria:

"These can be traced in considerable measure to war-like preparations in Arab countries, and the tension this naturally creates among frontier units. The central government of each country though is fully responsible for the acts of its armed forces and citizens."

* Possible meeting with Prime Minister Wilson:

"It is premature to speak of a meeting with Mr. Wilson. We should only be too glad to invite him here."

* Relations with Russia:

"There have been some developments in cultural exchange and in the conclusion of a property agreement. I responded positively to the Soviet Government message of January 1964, on the pacific settlement of disputes.

"On the other hand, we are disturbed by specific expressions of Soviet policy in connection with Arab-Israel relations. I refer to the recent Soviet speech and vote in the Security Council and above all, to the continuance of arms supplies to Egypt... Mr. Shelepin's statements in Cairo were of the same pattern as similar statements in the past.

"On our part we will continue our efforts to reach a closer understanding with the Soviet Union on the principles and measures required to achieve a reduction of tension in our region. Those principles are: respect for the sovereignty and integrity of states; respect for existing agreements; the cessation of arms shipments which cause an imbalance; opposition to aggressive actions and threats; and the insistence on peaceful settlement of disputes between the Arab States and Israel - these are the principles on which I should like to see all the Great Powers unite."

x Regarding possible presence of American satellite in Egypt and the Egyptian rocket programme:

"Considering Egyptian declarations and preparations for war, any aid by rocket experts of any nationality is a potential danger to peace in the Middle East and in the world.

"We have heard reports that there might possibly be American experts in Egypt, in work that may, or may not be connected with rocket development. Until I have further confirmation, I cannot say if this is true or not, but I am certain that this is not consistent with American policy."

x Regarding China's attitude towards Israel:

"We are exploring every possibility to establish connections with China. Her attitude in disparaging Soviet Israel was one of the first occasions to recognize the People's Republic and to support its request for admission to the U.N.

"In spite of past disappointments, I again reiterate our hope that China will one day adopt a different attitude to Israel.

x When will Israel act (internationally) if sabotage and border incidents increase?

"We shall do all we can diplomatically and apply to all governments and to the United Nations. But, in the final analysis we must rely on our own strength. If the scale increases, and the U.N. cannot help, we shall rely on our own deterrent power."

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