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TRANSCRIPTION OF TAPE I

QUESTION: Mr. Prime Minister, what are the Arab steps in connection with the Jordan waters which are considered by the Israeli Government as a limit ?

MR. ESHKOL: To reply to this question, I would say that any attempt to prevent Israel from utilizing its just share of the Jordan River system which was duly in accordance with the Unified Water Plan will be considered as if it were an encroachment on our borders.

QUESTION: Mr. Prime Minister, would you like to comment on the statement made by President Johnson yesterday evening, concerning the fact that no United States aid should be used by receiving countries in order to use their military powers for foreign ventures?

MR. ESHKOL: I doubt if it is for me to comment on this, but I would say it is a very clever and just statement. As a matter of fact, on my visit to the United States, when I was asked, I said that we are in favor always of helping the developing countries to build up their economy, or to provide food, but the Western countries helping and giving them money are entitled and have the right to ask that all the applying countries should use their funds first and foremost to develop their countries, and then ask for help, and not to build a war machine. When I heard the President's statement, I for one thought it was very, very clever, and very justified.

QUESTION: During your stay in the United States, you told American TV that you believe there is a peace camp in the Arab world.

It is not vocal yet, but it exists among Arab intellectuals. In one of the recent issues of the (background noise) published in, said that the Arabs have to accept Israel as a fact, present and real. And he sees the solution of the question not in the destruction of Israel, but in the entrance of Israel into a federation of Middle Eastern states. Do you consider this first Arab non-warlike utterance as belonging to the Arab peace camp you referred to, and do you think it is the beginning of an Arab- Israel dialogue?

The second question is, why is Israel so worried about an Arab program for diversion of the Jordan, as according to specialists, I was told, their project won't be operational for ten years. The Israel project, completed in 14 years, was considered a record in speedy construction.

MR. BENEKOL: It is difficult for me to tell you if this article in the mentioned paper is already a real beginning. This only confirms my belief that here and there somewhere maybe beneath the surface the new generation of the intelligentsia, maybe are beginning to revise their attitude and think differently. If this is a real beginning, and I can't tell you, we will always be prepared to start a dialogue with such people if they really mean that an understanding of Israel is a fait accompli and that it is here to stay.

Number two, about the diversion of the river. You know, that the Jordan River and the headwaters of the Jordan River have been flowing

for I don't know how many millions of years. This is a river ^{destined} designed to serve the purposes and needs of the reparian countries. We worked out a plan years ago and by this plan the water was divided. The Jordan system is the Jordan and the headwaters of the Jordan, the Sea of Galilee, and the Yarmak River. By this division, the waters of the Yarmak River will serve the needs of Jordan, and that is 60% of all the water of the system, and 40% for Israel. That's very important; it's a question of life. I wouldn't say death, but it is a question of life. You cannot develop a country, a agriculture, farming and industry without water in this part of the world. And even if you think it will take ten years. In another ten years, we will be even more in need of water than today. At least they say the diverting of the headwaters will be done in a year or two or three. But the need for water is not diminishing with the coming years of the country. So this is why I said once that this is blood in our body, and this is why I dealt with this question and said we will consider the problem as any nation would do, and consider it as an encroachment on our rights, on our border and on our territory.

QUESTION: Is Israel considering some diplomatic steps now after the decisions of the Cairo Conference? And is Israel going to contact Germany concerning the pressure on Germans taken by decision of the Cairo Conference?

MR. ESHEOL: Did you ask about diplomatic steps? You mean again the water problem? You know with regard to this problem we have assurances

from the United States, France and other countries and the attitude of dozens of friendly countries is a positive one. They understand and they acknowledge our right for our share of water. There are almost constant diplomatic ties and talks and discussions. Now about Germany, you may have heard that there is in the offing a meeting between the Chancellor Mr. Erhard and myself. In such a meeting, we may discuss various problems which interest both sides.

QUESTION: Any date about this meeting?

MR. ESHKOL: Not now, not now.

QUESTION: I hope you will permit me to ask a number of questions, in keeping with the procedure that has been established thus far. The first question, Mr. Eshkol, is in view of the inescapable Soviet veto ^{Council} in the Security/and the large hostile Arab-Soviet blocs and to a certain measure, Asian-African blocs in the General Assembly, do you believe that Israel can secure a fair hearing at the UN?

The second question is. You stated that you would place no ^{Mr.} obstacle in the way of Ben-Gurion if he wished to return to the position of Prime Minister --

MR. ESHKOL: Don't take it too seriously.

QUESTIONER, continuing: Are these feelings shared by a majority of your party.

The third question is, do you believe that the United States would come to Israel's assistance if it is attacked?

MR. ESHKOL: The first question, I must admit, is a strong point you have. At the same time, I believe that the discussion by the Security Council gave birth in the last instance which was the Almogor incident, and recently in the Dan incident, to a growing understanding of our position by the majority of the members of the Council. And things are not frozen; things are not changing. So being an optimist by nature, I believe that as our cause, to my mind, is a just cause, we still have hope for understanding.

Now, number two, this is very difficult. I didn't ask the leaders in our party. He himself didn't make such a suggestion, so we have to wait for it.

Thirdly, I believe that the United States is sincere in its assurances and they are of great significance to us, and I have already mentioned my visit to Washington and the talks I had then with the President of the United States. So, I believe they are sincere.

QUESTION: Do you believe, Mr. Prime Minister, that they will come to Israel's defense?

MR. ESHKOL: I dealt with the question, and I said what I wanted to say.

QUESTION: Mr. Prime Minister, in view of the unusual defense problems and in view of the fact that these unusual problems are growing in intensity, is the Government of the opinion that the time is ripe for planning unconventional weapons?

MR. ESHKOL: No, we don't think so. I would say, contrary to the question, that we will welcome any agreement on the disarmament in the Middle East with mutual inspection. So we would not like to plan for unconventional weapons.

QUESTION: Does the Prime Minister see any change in the resolutions passed at the Cairo Conference in relation to the resolutions approved at the previous one? If there is any change, would this result in a change in Israel's reactions to these positions. Secondly, the Cairo Conference this week passed a resolution for concerted action by all Arab countries against any state which may establish relations with Israel in the future. In how far will this affect Israel's foreign policy?

Third question. Will the U.S.-Israel nuclear desalinization project reduce the importance of the Jordan water scheme?

And the fourth question. May I ask the Prime Minister what he regards as the most important question to be clarified during his forthcoming talks with the German Prime Minister.

MR. ESHKOL: I'll start from the last and go back. I don't think it's proper for me to tell you now before I have met the Chancellor, to enumerate the questions and problems that we will discuss. There are many questions interesting to both sides, of course. For instance, one is the Common Market. I am sure you were expecting something different. (laughter). It's a very important question for Israel. And as for the

rest, after our meeting it will be easier for me to tell you what we discussed.

Now about the next question about the desalination of water. We are developing now only less than half of our territory. And I think that in 25 years from ^{we want} today/and we may double our population to reach close to five million. We will have to develop more farming in especially the dry part of Israel, in the Negev in the South. And more industry, and industry requires water too, chemical industries and others, petrochemicals. More people, more water, so we will need much more water than the first plan will be able to provide. It may take another ten years from today. There can be no discussion about our giving up our rights or a part of our natural waters. Then it is a question of price. The desalinated water will be very expensive. So there are two plans - one, to utilize every drop of water that nature gave to Israel. Israel is not too rich in natural resources, and even not in water. We discovered more water in Israel than some people believed, and every drop of water of our share is so precious that we feel as I said before, about it. It doesn't interfere and it doesn't compensate, the desalination of water which is still in its first, experimental stages.

Now, about the ~~threat~~ of the Arab states. The number of governments which have publicly ~~condemned~~ the Arab Boycott is growing. I saw in the papers that the German government said something in this vein.

But in order to put an end to Arab blackmail once and for all, I think that the Governmental declarations must be accompanied by concrete measures. I am thinking, for instance, of clear prohibitions by ministers of trade to Chambers of Commerce prohibiting them to attach their guarantee or signature to discriminatory anti-Israeli clauses in business documents demanded by the Arab states, of clear advice to Chambers of Commerce to ask their members to ignore threatening letters received from Arab boycott offices, of government assurances that companies penalized by Arab countries for not giving into Arab blackmail will be given full support and that steps will be taken by the Government to defend their interests. One would think that the Arab governments should start thinking of winding up the costly boycott apparatus, and then they go on asking for help and money from the Western countries, and spending this money better instead of feeding and educating their population. 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.

QUESTION: I would like you to comment on General ^{Hafiz} ~~Ben~~'s statement of Wednesday that ^{11/25} will further its relations with Russia, China and other Communist countries because of their support of the Palestine issues.

The second question is one very dear to your heart - Mr. Ben-Gurion. I would like to ask you. Although even some of his supporters consider

the measure ^{per se}, there is a decision to propose Mr. Ben-Gurion as Mapai Secretary-General at the next Convention. Taking into consideration the fact that there are rumors as to your willingness to make a gesture for rapprochement towards the former prime minister, would you like to tell us if you would eventually support such a proposal, if it would come?

MR. KSHIKOL: I'll start from the last one. I think that Mr. Ben-Gurion would be very welcome if he would choose to ask for this portfolio of General Secretary of the party, I think by all the party.

Now, about Hafa's statement. I don't think I have to comment about something that is his business. If he thinks that he can find friendship with Russia, China, that's his own business. It doesn't interest us.

QUESTION: Concerning the statement in the communique issued last Friday in Jerusalem between you and the Danish Prime Minister Kron on tourism, I would like you to make a comment. As I see it, it is a rather one-way traffic, Danes coming here. Do you see any possibility of either abandoning or lowering the travel tax that prohibits Israelis from going abroad; to a large extent?

MR. KSHIKOL: I am afraid that Israel proportionately has more tourists and people going out of the country, than other countries. Last year, we had more than 100,000 people leaving the country as tourists. And I am not sure that even the tax that we imposed, that even this, will hamper them from going abroad. So that the mutual interest of mutual help

between Israel and the European countries, tourists will come here, and our people will go there, I don't think it will be hurt by this.

QUESTION: Mr. Prime Minister, on the basis of the Intelligence estimates and assessments, that are available to you, on the Arab intentions with respect to the Jordan River, and within the context of the response you made to the first question that asked you, do you believe that Israel today is heading towards an eventual military showdown with the Arabs?

MR. ESHKOL: It depends very much on how they will try to implement their decisions.

QUESTIONER: Do you believe they will?

MR. ESHKOL: I would like to believe they will not.

QUESTION: Mr. Prime Minister, what do you think will be the effect of redemption of income taxes in Israel on UJA fund raising and Israel bond purchasing abroad?

MR. ESHKOL: I didn't think it has any connection at all. The UJA, with which I am sure you are familiar if you are asking this question, you know we have always considered that this is a common venture, the integration or taking in of immigrants to Israel, a partnership between us and the Jewish people in the world. I want to tell you that the part that the Jewish people in the entire world now takes on its shoulders is a very, very small one in proportion to what Israel is doing. So I cannot understand the connection between higher taxes or lower taxes

in Israel and the UJA. By reducing taxes, it is sometimes a means to attract private capital, in which we are very interested. Attracting more private capital means depending less on public funds. For housing, for immigration, for absorption and so on, building schools and hospitals. It is only maybe an implementation of what the Jewish people should have done for the absorption of immigrants to Israel.

QUESTION: Mr. Prime Minister, is there any meeting planned between yourself and Mr. Harold Wilson. Alternatively, has the government got any plans of sending an invitation to Mr. Wilson on his numerous trips, to visit this country?

MR. ESHKOL: I am afraid it is a little premature to answer your question. Your question was whether I will be meeting with Mr. Wilson in the near future? I am not denying it, but it is premature to tell you more details. And about inviting Mr. Wilson to Israel, we would be only too glad, and if my visit will take place in London, certainly I will try to invite him to Israel.

QUESTION: You recently referred to a hope for a dialogue with the Soviets. Is there any indication that one will take place? Has there been any change of policy that you perceived by the new Soviet regime towards Israel and the Jewish people?

The second question is - do you believe there is any connection between the growing friendship of King Hussein of Jordan and Abdul Nasser

of Egypt which is reflecting in the growing number of incidents along the Jordan-Israel border, the latest of which took place this morning.

MR. ESHKOL: I'll start as usual with the last question. It is our assessment that the recent tension both on Syrian and Jordan frontier - you asked about the Jordan frontier - can be traced in considerable measure to the development of a warlike preparations in Arab countries, and the tension which this naturally creates among frontier units. But nevertheless, of course, we feel the responsibilities lie with the governments, although here and there is is maybe only actions of local commanders, but for us the responsibility lies with the governments.

Then you asked about the Soviet Union. (Changeover to tape II)

TAPE II: as you know, of the Soviet Government in January 1964 wanted a specific settlement of disputes. Mr. Gromyko submitted proposals to the General Assembly of the United Nations on this matter, emphasizing that they apply to all sovereign states. On the other hand, we are disturbed by specific expressions of Soviet policy in connection with Arab-Israel relations. I refer to the recent Syvich speech and the vote in the Security Council. And above all, the continuance of arms supplies whose leader openly threatens aggression against Israel. Mr. Shalepin's statements in Cairo were of the same pattern as similar statements in the past. We, on our part, will

continue our efforts to reach a closer understanding with the Soviet Union on the principles and measures required to achieve a relaxation 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 of arms, opposition to aggressive actions and threats, and insistence upon some peaceful settlements of disputes between the Arab states and Israel. These are the principles on which I should like to see all the great powers united. And I hope that a day will come, times does for itself, and a day will come. There was a question, I think you asked it too, about Soviet Jewry when I spoke about the dialogue. I have made statements, the most recent of which was made at the Zionist Congress, and today I have nothing to add to that statement.

QUESTION: I should like to go over to another level, not concerned with security, but with the Zionist Congress which ended with a rather stormy session. The Prime Minister has, on various occasions, given the Congress a call for consolidation and crystallization of Jews throughout the world around Israel. Could the Prime Minister now explain the opposition to the suggestions or demands of Herut and Zohar for what they call adequate representation in the Zionist bodies?

MR. ESHKOL: It's not in the Zionist bodies; it's in the Executive. And Executive as in many countries of the world, is a coalition of three

or four parties and not of five or six or seven and eight, or a dozen parties. It has nothing to do with consolidation. You can consolidate a movement and develop a movement, and not all the parts or all the parties will participate in the executive. It is not necessarily important.

QUESTION: Mr. Prime Minister, do you believe that Israel's security position at home, and its diplomatic and political condition abroad, vis-a-vis the intensified Arab pressures against Israel, is better today than it was when you first took office in June of 1963?

MR. ESHKOL: I hope it is better.

QUESTION: Recently, Mr. Eban in an interview with Yediot Ahronot, said Israel was exploring the possibility of relations, contacts with the Chinese People's Republic. Would you care to expand on that?

My second question is concerned with internal policy. The Sabbath Law is due for discussion in the Parliament soon. Would you care to comment on that?

MR. ESHKOL: I don't think there is anything to add or comment. Eban said what he said and it's right. We are exploring; we are trying every possibility to establish our connections, but it is a little bit disappointing, their attitude towards Israel, because Israel was one of the first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China and to support their request for admission to the United Nations. But in spite of these past disappointments, I again reiterate our hope that China will

one day adopt a different attitude towards Israel and then will exert its great influence on behalf of peace in our region. So this is exactly what he said, I think.

About the Sabbath Law, you know that according to the status quo, the famous status quo, such a law has to be introduced, and I think it will be introduced during this session of the Knesset. Today a special coalition committee is working on formulating this law.

QUESTION: The Arab states are trying to transform the conflict with Israel into a conflict between oppressed peoples in the Palestine nation and an oppressor, Israel, and they have created a special ^{front} fund, and Syria has sent delegations throughout the world, particularly to Africa and other countries. Do you think that these delegations didn't have any success till now, and how do you see the debate which is coming on on the refugees in the United Nation, and what do you think is the attitude of the Soviet Russia, the Communist bloc countries towards this National Liberation?

MR. ESHKOL: The establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization proves one very interesting thing to my mind, conclusively, that the demand for the return of refugees is utterly misleading, or was all the time. The P.L.O. has the intention to use the refugees for aggression against the State of Israel, which was admitted to the United Nations with the support of the great powers, if you remember. The

Israel Defense Force will stand ready and vigilant to repel any aggression against Israel's territory and population. The activity in connection with the P.L.O. may well encourage certain governments and organizations in the Arab world to embark on fedayeen raids. I am not going now to comment on the attitude of other governments to the P.L.O. or to this creation. Israel has confidence in the friendship of many states in all the continents of the world and in their promises to support the sovereignty and integrity of Israel. I draw your attention to specific statements in this sense such as those made by authorized spokesmen for the United States and France. In the Middle Eastern context, there is great importance in the doctrine formulated by the Soviet Union about the prohibition of the use of force in territorial disputes between sovereign states.

QUESTION: Two questions. In contrast to the Israeli press which generally understood the Government's decision to recall Mr. Shinar from Bonn, there was a demonstration of protest against the stand of Western Germany not to ^{to} the Statute of Limitations and to recall the Western German atomic scientists, as they are termed, from Egypt. The German press, on the contrary, explained the nomination of the director of the Israeli Defense Ministry, Mr. Asher Ben-Nafan to the post of ^{Arthur} unofficial ambassador to Bonn, as a clear sign of strengthening Israel's relations with Western Germany and especially as a ^{of} the news about close cooperation in the field of ^{announcements/} what

is the answer to this question.

And the second one. You said that Israel will surely act if the Arabs make changes in the Jordan Water question beyond the Johnston plan. Should these reactions be understood as actions in the political sphere solely, in the framework of the United Nations, or may they go beyond, that's to say, to be a hint on military action.

MR. ESHKOL: The first question. Dr. Shinar expressed his desire to resign because of ill health. And appointment of Mr. Ben-Nathan is simply a continuation of what Dr. Shinar did until now, and no special consequences and no special explanations can take place.

About the Jordan water. I think I said everything I want to say. I said that we will consider it as an encroachment on our territory and on our soil. I think that explains everything.

QUESTION: Mr. Prime Minister, about a half an hour ago, a man walked into this room and presented a letter to you. If it is not a private letter, could you tell us what it is all about? (Laughter)

MR. ESHKOL: When was that? I didn't receive any letter.

QUESTION: Mr. Eshkol, I have three very brief questions. The first question is, would you personally like to see Israel enter NATO? The second question is, to your knowledge is there any truth to the report that American rocket experts are working in Egypt. The third question is, several years ago Mr. Ben-Gurion stated that the atomic

pile reactor would be operable by 1964. Is it working now?

MR. ESHKOL: All right, I'll start with Dimona. The Dimona reactor is now in experimental running-in-stage. It may still take some time, you know engineers in the world. When they promise something, you always have to add a little time until it will be accomplished.

Then, we have heard reports that there might possibly be Americans engaged in Egypt in work that may or may not - we don't know - be connected with rocket development. Until I have heard a confirmation or had knowledge or information, I cannot say if this is true or not. Certainly, this is inconsistent with American policy.

The question about NATO does not arise. Israel is not asking for admission to NATO.

QUESTION: Mr. Eshkol, we are now in an election year. Would it be possible for you to give us an indication of the main points of Mapai's platform. And how far this is likely to be modified by possible alignments with Ahdut Avoda.

MR. ESHKOL: I think it is pretty premature, it is pretty early to discuss. And in the meantime we have a conference of Mapai and then a conference of the Histadrut, so I think it is premature.

QUESTION: One question about the Rina Eitan case. I don't know if you are aware that in addition to public opinion in Israel, questions are often asked abroad.
Do you think it is proper for a government based on principles accepted

the world over, that a woman has not automatically the nationality of her husband, an Israeli. Two, that a person who has served in the army has not automatically received citizenship?

MR. ESHKOL: You know, of course, that this is now an issue between parties. And if you ask my personal attitude to this problem, of course I agree with you that Mrs. Eitani and her son be full-fledged citizens.

QUESTION: the recaptulation of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, Saladin. (laughter) .. there are still two places and the Room of the Last Supper, which are now in Israel. 17 years have elapsed since this is no longer under Moslem custodianship, but are not permitted to go in ... change /..

MR. ESHKOL: I think it is worthwhile really to make a real study (laughter) and I promise you, and maybe next time I will be able to reply.

QUESTION: Judging by the past record of the USSR attitude towards Israel, do you think Russia is interested in any large war between Israel and the Arabs at this stage, as a consequence of the water question.

MR. ESHKOL: My belief is that Russia is not interested. And my hope is that Russia is interested in the well-being and existence of Israel as a state within its borders.

QUESTION: Assuming that the border incidents will increase, at what point will Israel act, and in what form will the protest aside from any military retaliation, take? What is open to you in the form of international protest, assuming that you don't move militarily?

If the sabotage and border incidents are planned to increase.

MR. ESHKOL: You know there are times when you have to rely on your own strength, and of course, we will apply to friendly governments, to the United Nations, but *ultima ratio*, we have to rely on our own strength. You have even today, from time to time, shootings, exchange of shots. If it will be, God forbid, on the bigger scale and if the United Nations Security Council will not be able to prevent it, we will rely on our strength, and our deterrent power.

QUESTION: I won't stand, because I won't do anything so formal ^{move a} as to vote of thanks, but I do want to thank you on behalf of all our members for being with us today for lunch, and for bringing along your charming lady. After a few minutes conversation with Mrs. Eshkol, I would like to say that any time she wants to be our guest, we'll be delighted. (applause).

As you know, Mr. Eshkol, we looked forward to this meeting for some time, and I think my colleagues will agree with me when I say that professionally, it's been worth waiting for. We've been very satisfied professionally and personally, it was a great pleasure.

I want to thank our other guests too for being with us. We enjoyed having all of you, and I hope we will see you again soon.

MR. ESHKOL: Thank you very much.

(applause).