

PRESS BULLETIN

EMBARGO
20.00
hrs

INDEPENDENCE DAY ADDRESS
BY MR. LEVI ESHKOL, PRIME MINISTER

Jerusalem, April 15,
1964

APRIL 15 1964

On the eve of the 17th year of Israel's independence I bring the greetings of the Government to all Israel at home and throughout the Diaspora. May this be a year of immigration, security and consolidation.

On this day it is our hope that all Jews at home and abroad will intensify their devotion to the common national aims of the consolidation and progress of Israel, and enhancing the Jewish content of life in the Diaspora.

During the past year we were once again privileged to welcome large numbers of immigrants. Our capacity to bring them in and absorb them has again been tested, and we have stood the test. The past year's immigration brings us still nearer to the stage when we shall have completed the task of bringing in those Jews from the lands of distress who are free to settle in Israel. We note this with both satisfaction and concern: satisfaction at our achievements and concern for the future.

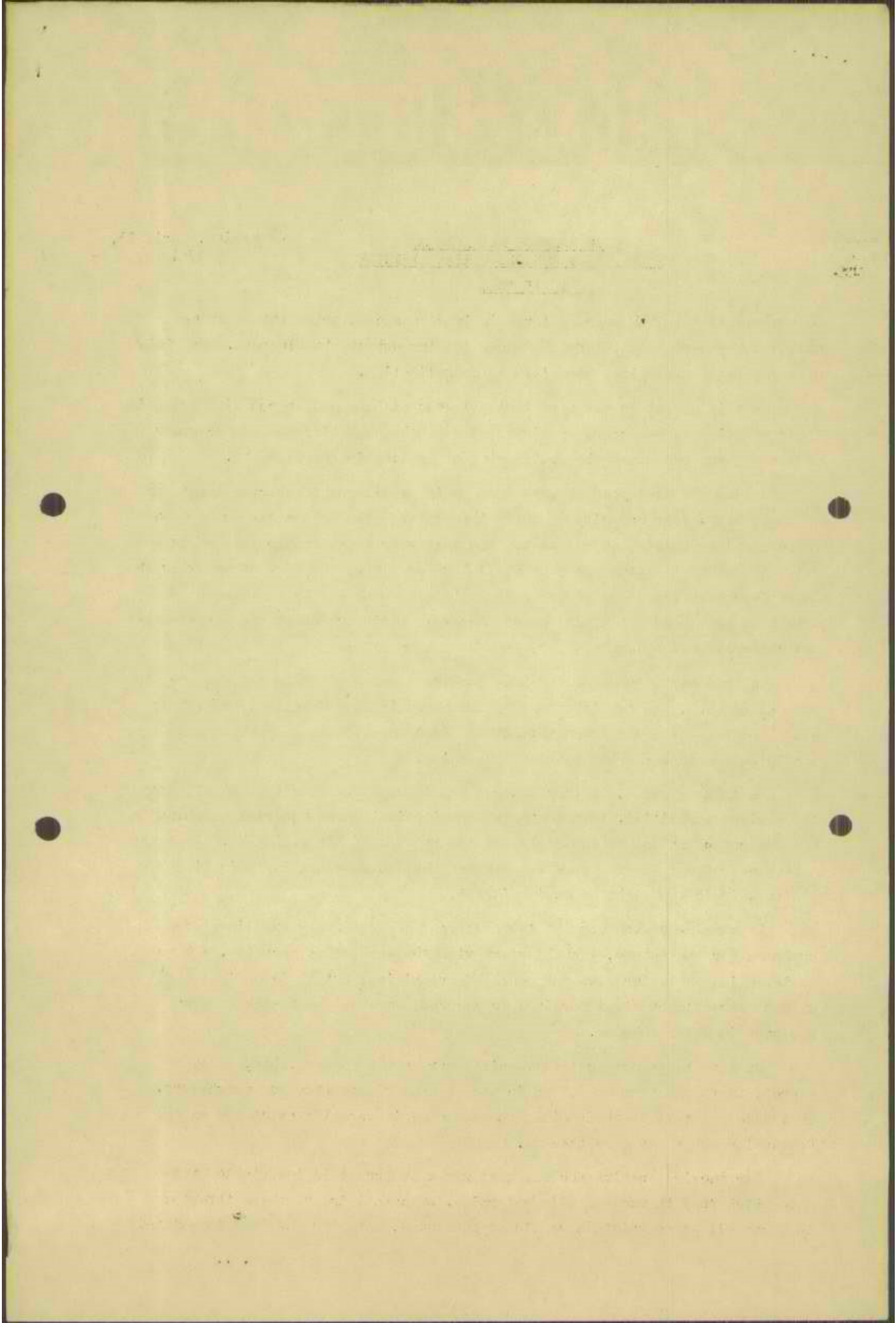
On this day we cherish the hope for the opening of the gates and the renewal of our contacts with those Jewish communities - especially a certain and important one - who are still cut off from the life of our people and participation in our great task of redemption.

On this day, too, we look towards the lands of prosperity and call upon the Jewish communities, to make their contribution - both material and human - for the consolidation of the State and the raising of its standards. We shall make every effort to help them to reawaken the Jewish spark in their lives and to walk in the light of Jewish ideals.

In summing up the work of the past year and sketching out lines of progress for the future, I shall start with the problem of security. I have no intention of laying down any scale of priorities, but it is obvious that unless Israel's physical survival is secured, we shall be unable to make progress in other spheres.

We have had a comparatively quiet year on the borders, but, to my regret, there has been no let-up in the threats of war from our neighbours; they have not made up their minds to acquiesce in Israel's existence as the foundation for a peace settlement.

Our enemies openly proclaim that war with Israel is inevitable at a date which they themselves will determine. We cannot ignore these threats; they compell us to maintain continual readiness, both for the days immediately



ahead and for the more distant future when our neighbours will come to the conclusion that they have become strong enough to make a fresh attempt to carry out their designs. We must be prepared, with arms of sufficient quality and quantity, with well-trained man power and a strong economy, to repulse our enemies and break the forces they are preparing against us. We must maintain the deterrent strength of the Israel Defence Forces, so that, no one should cherish the thought that it is possible to challenge Israel to war.

During the past year we have increased our strength by improving the skills of our army, by putting into operation additional weapons, and expanding our own arms manufacture. This progress will be partially reflected tomorrow at the Defence Forces' parade in Beersheba. We must continue to enhance our strength in all these and other spheres in the coming year, for it is a matter of life or death.

It gives me profound satisfaction today to send from here a special greeting to the Israel Defence Forces and all the staffs of our defence establishment. Our lives, the survival of the State, the future of the Jewish people, are in your faithful hands. You are doing your work with great devotion, despite many difficulties and sometimes in complete anonymity. Be strong and of good courage.

In our foreign relations, our policy is founded on the same concern for the preservation of our security despite the designs of our enemies. We shall persevere in our efforts to establish relations of friendship and peace. We do not accept the crude belief that the Arab-Jewish conflict is the dividing line between all the nations in the Middle East. The vital distinction is that between peace-loving nations and aggressors. While we must be ready to meet the dangers of aggression, we must seek out every factor, without distinction of nation or tongue, which is ready to contribute towards peace and stability in the Middle East, and offer our hand in peace and friendship.

Over the heads of our recalcitrant neighbours we shall continue to offer our friendship to the developing nations, most of which have recently been liberated from foreign tutelage. We can meet them as a nation that, like them, has regained its freedom in recent years, and share with them the fruits of the experience we have gained in rebuilding our country - in science, technology and social values.

The great powers have an important part to play in ensuring stability and peace in the Middle East. There was a time, not so long ago, when we regarded the very recognition of Israel's existence as an achievement in itself. Now we call upon the great powers to help all the nations of the area to develop their economies, improve social standards and achieve stability and peace. What is wanted is true development, which will bring prosperity to the masses and make it impossible to incite them against other nations. Let the great powers compete in such assistance and not in the supply of arms to potential aggressors, which compels us to devote to defence too large a part of the resources that should be dedicated to constructive development, and which obliges us to seek and demand the defence armaments that we require.

Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is arranged in several paragraphs across the page.

In full responsibility and goodwill, we have accepted the proposal that the use of force be ruled out as a method of settling international disputes. We are entitled to expect that the initiators of this proposal, and other powers as well, should make it perfectly clear to our neighbours that this principle applies to all, without exception. No country can be allowed to pretend to be a lover of peace by adopting a positive attitude towards disputes that are none of its concern, while continuing to utter threats of war against its neighbours.

At the present moment our enemies have not even accepted the principle of co-existence as a nominal obligation. Their threats of violence continue. We shall welcome any clear statement by friendly powers that no one will be allowed to commit aggression against us. But we cannot base our security on words alone, nor can we agree that our very existence should be dependent on the goodwill of others. As in all the other fields of endeavour - in economy, social life and culture -, we must continue to rely first and foremost on ourselves, and enhance our own strength.

We are sincerely grateful for all the help we have had in building our economy and integrating the immigrants; we have done our best to put it to good use. Humanity now stands on the threshold of an era in which the waters of the sea will be purified and used for the benefit of mankind. The water problem is becoming more and more urgent in many parts of the world; in our area it is already so. We hope to play our modest part in this effort to develop methods of desalinating sea water for the benefit of our own country, the entire Middle East and the world at large. We should appreciate any assistance, both in know-how and in financial resources, in this effort.

We are entering into the practical stage in our relations with the European Common Market. This is only a small beginning; we are still far from obtaining what we require. It is our duty to make every possible effort to expand our export opportunities and improve our trade relations, so that we may make progress towards economic independence, which alone will give full meaning to our political independence and give us the self-respect of a nation living on its own labours.

This is not a task for one year alone; all we can do is to pinpoint the goal and mark out the direction. By the end of this decade we must reduce the gap between our imports and exports and make substantial progress towards the closing of the gap in the coming years. This calls for a tremendous effort to improve productivity and quality, and we shall have to impose a strict order of priorities in satisfying economic demands.

Our economic development is closely interwoven with our scale of social values. Our society cannot endure if it is founded on an collective and individual scale of values based on the benefits we draw from society and not on our contribution to society. Such a topsy-turvy scale of values leads to constant demands on the State even from circles which are not particularly backward or underprivileged, at times resulting in grave injury to the general welfare. The deplorable way of life, characterized by conspicuous consumption, of a few who pursue wealth, luxury and comfort, should not be a will o' the wisp that beckons us to demand more and more.

Faint, illegible text at the top of the page, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side.



Large area of very faint, illegible text in the middle of the page.



Large area of very faint, illegible text at the bottom of the page.

All spheres of our activity, all our central aims, depend to no little extent on the character of the society we are building and our capacity to unite on the basis of social and national values.

In order to restore respect for these values, we need the right kind of education. We must expand our education of all kinds in the spheres of knowledge and know-how; we have achieved much in this field, but not yet enough. But we cannot impart knowledge without at the same time imparting values; we cannot acquire prosperity if we turn our backs on the things of the spirit. Let us not deceive ourselves: voluntary effort, the readiness to take the lead and set an example - in one phrase, personal halutzit or pioneering, arising out of a free decision, will still be necessary for many years to come.

The State must prepare itself for a prolonged collective pioneering effort; it must create the frameworks, secure and supply the resources, give the lead, encourage, spur and stimulate. For all these purposes it needs the contribution of the pioneer, who identifies himself utterly with the difficult historic tasks that we have undertaken.

A happy Independence Day to you all.

* * * *