

Arab Refugees

Discussion of Jordan's contribution to the stability of the area led directly to a statement volunteered by Ambassador Harman that Israel has interested itself in and has discussed with the Department Jordan's economic development and the possibility of coupling it with efforts to move forward with the Arab refugee problem. He described Jordan as an excellent proving ground for efforts to disperse the refugees because there are no political or civil barriers between the refugees and the rest of the populace. If a pool of 100,000 jobs could be created in Jordan, it would draw off enough of the refugees to begin a dispersal from the camps and the disappearance of the problem. Mr. Bundy asked the Ambassador if he believes the Arabs are any more willing than before to consider solutions, not involving a return to Israel. Ambassador Harman replied that he finds hope in the area's heightened interest in economic development, which might make things possible now that were out of the question some years ago. The whole area is development-minded.

Mr. Gazit suggested that an intelligent development of the Yarmuk would provide 40,000 of the 100,000 jobs mentioned by Ambassador Harman.

After an exchange of assurances that the preservation of the present relative tranquillity of the area is much to be desired, the Israelis departed with Mr. Bundy's assurances that he would be glad to receive them at any time. He remarked, however, that problems of the kind discussed should in the first instance be approached through the State Department.

13. Editorial Note

On February 19, 1961, President Kennedy issued an executive order abolishing the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB), which, during the Eisenhower administration, had provided a mechanism for coordinated interdepartmental implementation of national security policies adopted by the National Security Council and approved by the President. The President's statement is printed in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961*, pages 104-105. With this action the President transferred to the Department of State a number of OCB responsibilities including the preparation of papers delineating