

35. Editorial Note

On April 17, 1961, Deputy Special Counsel to the President Myer Feldman telephoned Secretary Rusk about the proposed meeting between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Ben Gurion. According to the memorandum of conversation, "The Sec returned the call and F said he met with the Pres this afternoon with a man from NY named Abe Feinberg. The Sec thinks he knows him. F said he just returned from Israel and met with Ben Gurion and Meir and they raised with him what the Amb raised with the Sec—that is the possibility of a meeting between the Pres and BG. The Pres acting on the Sec's advice was reluctant but Feinberg said they apparently regard it as extremely urgent. The Pres said he would be in NY on the 27th—he won't make any announcements of any kind or commitments and assumes no one will—but if BG happens to be there and he is going to be here at Feinberg's invitation he will see him the morning of the 28th. The Pres wanted it checked with the Sec. The Sec said all right under those circumstances. The problem was the parade. F said no announcement here or by us—they just happen to be there and meet quietly. F will report to the Pres." (Department of State, Rusk Files: Lot 72 D 192, Telephone Conversations)

On April 20, Talbot told Bowles that people in his bureau were upset over the cumulative effect the visit might have on the Arab world. (Memorandum of telephone conversation; *ibid.*, Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 66 D 147) On April 21, Bowles told Feldman that he had been convinced that the visit should not take place. Feldman responded, according to notes of the conversation: "The difficulty in getting out of this now is that the President has already said okay and plans have been started in New York. Mr. Ben-Gurion was notified of the President's decision through unofficial channels." (*ibid.*) On April 24, Feldman telephoned Rusk from the President's office to say that the meeting would take place in New York on May 30. (Memorandum of telephone conversation; *ibid.*, Rusk Files: Lot 72 D 192, Telephone Conversations) Meyer informed Harman of the decision on April 24. (Memorandum of conversation; *ibid.*, Central Files, 884A, 1901/5-1661)