United States Position

A firm position has not recently been taken on this subject since the issue is dormant. It is realized, however, that the present Arab states are, in general, artificial entities created by the British and French some thirty years ago to divide the Arab world into small states so that they could be more effectively controlled. In view of the paucity of resources in the individual states, and in view of the changed political situation, there would be important advantages, as well as disadvantages, for the United States in a union of two or more Arab states. The advantages would include 1) it would be simpler to deal with one state, rather than several, in MEDO, Point Four and other programs, 2) the new entity would presumably be more viable and hence require less foreign aid and 3) would be more attractive for private United States investment. Disadvantages would include 1) the possibility of the larger ,more self-sufficient entity being more intransigent and hence more difficult to deal with, 2) more of a danger to us if the larger state would oppose United States policies.

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Department of State Position Paper [1]

SECRET   [WASHINGTON, May 5, 1953.]
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SYRIA

SUMMARY PAPER [2]

1. *Internal Political Situation:* General Shishikli's dictatorship apparently well established and now entering eighteenth month. Announcement new draft constitution imminent, with publication text and popular referendum this summer. Elections possible in autumn. Confused reform by decree law continues. Internal and external plotting against State so far unsuccessful.

2. *Palestine Question:* Shishikli has quietly authorized settlement 80,000 Arab refugees in Syria; is conducting secret negotiations Israel for revision common border. Privately admits desirability

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[1] One of a series of papers prepared for the briefing book for the Secretary's trip to the Middle East and South Asia; see footnote 1, Document 604.
[2] Annexed to this summary paper as tabs were position papers on each of the problems summarized.