

The policy of the United States to support the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in this matter has thus been realized, and the impediment to the present grant of economic aid to Israel has been removed.

Programs for economic aid to other states of the Near East are in an advanced state of formulation, and it is expected that some of them can shortly be announced.

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*The Chargé in Israel (Russell) to the Department of State*¹

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538. From Johnston. Johnston and I spent hour with Foreign Minister Sharett this morning at his residence Tel Aviv. Tone of discussion was friendly. Johnston sketched background US interest Jordan water plan and stressed US security interest in Middle East.

Essence of Foreign Minister's comment was: (1) Argument for inclusion Litani River in Jordan water plan; (2) Political obstacles arising out of Arab unwillingness negotiate with Israel or participate in joint undertaking with her; and (3) Need for "more than persuasion" by US to compel Arab cooperation.

In reply, Johnston made clear: (1) That for many reasons Litani was outside the scope of present discussions; (2) That present political considerations make demand for direct negotiations untenable and obviate possibility of direct multilateral agreement between parties. As alternative he indicated unilateral declarations by the parties would be satisfactory as sole guarantees of acceptance of the principles contained in the TVA report with international or neutral regulatory authority to control distribution of water within the framework of the plan; (3) Degree of cooperation which US extends to other countries will depend on the degree of cooperation they extend to US.

Foreign Minister raised additional points such as: Defects of TVA plan, waters could be used better elsewhere; the waters of the Jordan could not be taken away from Israel without compensation, et cetera.

Johnston pointed out that waters of the Jordan River rise mainly in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Conceivable these countries could

¹ Repeated to Amman, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Jidda, Baghdad, and Jerusalem.