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Report by the President's Special Representative (Johnston) to the President

SECRET

[WASHINGTON?,] November 17, 1953.

REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT ON NEAR EAST MISSION

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

United States policy toward the Arab-Israel dispute should aim at practical solutions of practical problems. A political settlement is not possible at the present time.

The United Nations report proposing unified development of the resources of the Jordan Valley represents a practical approach to the basic question of the Arab refugees, the potentially explosive problem of rights to the waters of the Jordan, and the tangled boundary situation.

The Jordan Valley project should therefore be pursued as a central element of American policy in the Near East. Decisions with respect to American political support and economic assistance should be conditioned upon the attitude displayed by the states concerned toward the United Nations proposals.

The Jordan Valley program should be pressed through a second visit to the region in the near future.

REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT ON NEAR EAST MISSION

In pursuance of the mission you entrusted to me on October 7, 1953, I have held initial discussions in the Near East with the Governments of Jordan, Israel, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt.

These discussions had a specific objective: to emphasize the importance which the United States attaches to the recent United Nations report, *Unified Development of the Water Resources of the Jordan Valley*, and to urge the states concerned to consider with an open mind the forward-looking proposals it contains.

They have without exception indicated willingness to do this, and to undertake discussions on a more definitive basis in several months' time.

This understanding was obtained in an atmosphere of extreme tension deriving from certain incidents which had inflamed public opinion to the danger point just prior to my arrival in the area. It would be difficult to imagine circumstances less conducive to favorable reception of the Jordan Valley proposals, and it is my opinion that only the weight of your personal representations prevented