

(f) The Israel military authorities have maintained and to some extent increased a deliberate policy of retaliation which is not overruled by the civil government.

I transmitted the Israeli request to the Pentagon where it is still under discussion. My letter of transmittal indicated that the State Department would probably desire to comply with the Israeli request for political reasons. Conversation with officials at the Pentagon however indicates that they are quite opposed. The military objection is in fact more political than military. They feel that this move would react against us in the Middle East and specifically they feel it may affect the matter of present and prospective base rights in the area, including Saudi Arabia and Libya. They will probably leave a loop-hole in their reply to us however so that we can overrule them on political grounds if we feel it necessary to do so. Unfortunately I have concluded that our own political evaluation, except of course from the viewpoint of Israel itself, coincides with theirs rather than differs from the military point of view.

In view of the above I request that I be authorized to inform the Israeli Ambassador that the United States cannot grant approval to the Israeli request at this time. They will thereupon purchase jets elsewhere, probably from the Swedes or the British. Our refusal will not mean, therefore, that Israel will be denied these weapons, but it will mean that the United States will not suffer throughout the Middle East from the sale.

If you agree with the above I will try to find other ways of satisfying to some extent, the feeling of the Israelis that we do not wish to work with them on military matters. They have asked for certain less dangerous weapons which I believe we can go ahead with. When General Dayan visits here in the near future we will try to see that he does not leave with the impression that we are uninterested in their military capabilities on the side of the West, etc.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Secretary Dulles initialed his approval of this memorandum.

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*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Byroade)*

SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] June 8, 1954.

Subject: Israeli matters