

MEMORANDUM

June 16, 1955

TO: Herb

From: MMK

This ought to provide the basis for a release for Hubert's Saturday speech. If you need more material, I think you will have to borrow from the press release you issued on refugees.

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Excerpts from Speech  
by  
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey  
before  
Zionist Organization of America  
June 18, 1955

It is hardly possible for anyone concerned, as I am, with the foreign relations of the American government to be unaware or unappreciative of the role played by the Zionist Organization of America in the field that commands its particular attention. The Zionist Organization of America, today, as over many years in the past, renders invaluable service in strengthening the relations between the peoples of the United States and Israel, and in furthering America's vital interests in the Middle East by supporting a program of democracy and peace in that region. An organization such as this, which devotes itself to creating bonds of understanding and good will between American and Israel, whereby the ideals common to both lands are brought to closer realization, earns the commendation and gratitude of all conscientious Americans.

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But all is not well with Israel; they are not sitting at ease in Zion. That little republic, which Americans~~se~~ did a great deal to create, and in which the people and the government of the United States have a moral, a sentimental and a practical stake, is surrounded by neighbors who insist on looking upon themselves as its mortal enemies.

Moreover, like all countries in that region, Israel stands in need of economic aid, more especially because in the brief span of its existence, only seven years, it has admitted and undertaken to integrate into its economy 750,000 refugees -- a number equal to its original population -- who have been the victims of Nazi persecution, or who have fled from the Communist system of life, or from Arab hatred, violence and oppression.

Finally, together with many other countries of the world, Israel needs a shield to bear in the common defense against totalitarian aggression.

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I should like to touch briefly on these three aspects of Israel's uneasiness, and their relation to the policies of the United States government.

First, as to Israel's growing sense of isolation. Without exception, the Arab states -- which completely surround Israel's land borders -- have pursued toward the new republic a policy of relentless hostility. This enmity takes the form of unceasing threats of extermination, rigid and absolute economic blockade, border raids devoted to pillage and murder, and what amounts to virtually open warfare. One of the few things upon which the Arab states seem to be able to agree is the destruction of Israel. When the Egyptian Premier states, as he did on October 27 of last year, that "there will be no peace between us and the Jews as long as a single speck of Palestinian soil remains in enemy hands," he is echoed a week later by the Premier of Syria, who declared: "The Arabs will not approve of peace so long as the Jews remain settled

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in that spot." Rulers, government spokesmen, press, radio and other organs of public expression reiterate these belligerent intentions in every country of the Arab world.

And Israel now has a new source of dismay. The Western Powers have created a security pact with Iraq, one of the most articulate of Israel's enemies, the single Arab state which has not so much as concluded an armistice with Israel; and the United States is supplying Iraq with arms. Bids for similar pacts and offers of arms have been made to other Arab countries -- either directly or indirectly. Worst of all, no supply of arms and no proposal for a security pact has thus far been offered to Israel.

Whereas every Arab state has military alliances in the Middle East or elsewhere in the world, Israel has none. In a world besieged by fears and threats that cannot be ignored, Israel stands isolated.

Israel finds it difficult to understand how such a situation is permitted to exist, particularly in view of the help and encouragement it has received from our country -- support which we have always been proud to give. More and more the people of Israel are becoming convinced that, despite the friendliest feelings that exist between the two countries, the United States government is courting the Arab nations at the expense of Israel. For proof, they point above all to their present exclusion from the security plans of their friends in the West.

Whether or not we are actually -- even if not intentionally -- favoring the Arab states over Israel, it remains true that as of today Israel is isolated, and that it is not to the interests of the United States or of the free democratic world that Israel should stay isolated.

Nearly four months ago, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs stated that "it would seem highly logical

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that Israel should be incorporated in a collective defense arrangement at an early date." It grows no less logical with each passing month. It has been some time since the State Department first disclosed that the United States government is in the process of re-appraising its Middle Eastern policy. Such a re-appraisal, I submit, is of urgent importance. It is as important to American interests as it is to the security of Israel. We should, I think, put a true and realistic valuation on Israel as a democratic ally in the struggle for peace and freedom.

Though it is a small country, Israel offers great assets to the United States and to the defense of the Western world. Geographically, it constitutes a land bridge which unites Africa with all the Asiatic lands of the Middle East. To the south it provides a short land route from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, one that, unlike the Suez Canal, cannot be put out of commission; to the north, it affords the only mountain-free corridor in the Levant that leads

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from western to eastern waters. It is the only country in the area possessing technical ability on a large scale, plants for the manufacture of precision and other requisite instruments, a chemical industry, a mammoth oil refinery~~s~~, and a skilled labor force. It is no secret that the army of Israel represents a substantial military factor, well-trained and efficient. And, perhaps most important, Israel has a stable, modern, democratic government at the head of a mature, self-disciplined and responsible population -- a unique phenomenon and an asset without duplicate in the Middle East.

With the proper economic aid, under our Mutual Security Program, the United States can increase these defense resources to Israel to the exact measure in which we strengthen Israel's economy -- quite apart from the normal benefits that every other part of the world derives when any one part is enabled to prosper.

The defense of the Middle East, moreover, as it stands today and we hope for many years to come, is not solely or even mainly

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a matter of guns and planes. The United States, together with the rest of the free world, is engaged in a desperate conflict of ideals, values and moralities. For us, then, a genuine ally, an ally that will stick with us through thick and thin, is an ally that shares the ideals, values and moralities of Western civilization. In the Middle East Israel is, almost exclusively and alone, such an ally.

The people of Israel have been fighting for peace, freedom and democracy for tens of centuries. They will remain in the fight. They can be relied on; and they should be aided not merely because they will give us something in return for cash or guns, but because of their own history and character impel them to be faithful to the same ideals that we Americans cherish most. They are not mercenaries to be bought, or onlookers and neutrals to be enticed; they are brothers in the family of free peoples and should be sustained as such with economic aid and security guarantees.

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The same fundamental principles that should apply to our relations with Israel should also guide our relations with the Arab states -- that is, the principle of fortifying our defenses in behalf of democracy.

In the case of Israel, democracy already exists there, and what Israel needs from us is the hard and flat assurance that its democracy shall not be overwhelmed. In the Arab lands, however, democracy is either non-existent or in an embryonic stage. A nation can be given a grant-in-aid or a grant-of-arms, but it cannot be given a grant-of-democracy. The best we can do for the Arab Middle East, and we should bend every effort to do it, is to help change the economic and social and health conditions so that the Arab populations will be enabled to win their own way to a freer, fuller, more democratic life. The ultimate security of the region depends upon such a development.

It is at this point that peace and normal commerce between the Arab states and Israel becomes of paramount importance not only to

themselves but to the entire free world. The establishment of peace -- and the healthy intercourse of trade, techniques and ideas that would follow upon peace -- between neighbors that have such basic common interests as the peoples of the Arab states and Israel, will introduce a new era of stability, progress, and prosperity throughout the Middle East. Democracy in one form or another, and its forms are many, is sure to follow. And communism will have been checkmated -- not only in the air or at gun point, but from the bottom up.

Over the past seven years, ever since the Arab states declared war on Israel, the American government has stressed the urgent need of peace in that region. That the efforts to achieve peace have not yet succeeded is no reason why they should not be continued; and in view of what is at stake -- the prosperity and security of a vital part of the world -- they should be redoubled.

Israel has repeatedly offered to negotiate a peace, and the Arabs have as often rejected the offers. Yet none of the issues

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which divide the two sides is beyond adjustment, once the Arab states concede Israel's right to exist and the indispensable conditions for its existence. For reasons hard to fathom, the Arab states have seemingly been able to persuade the United States to defer action on the security of the only democracy in the whole area despite their own belligerency toward Israel -- in return for doing us the favor of accepting, or considering the acceptance of, our arms. We must make it clear without delay that we regard Israel's security as vital to our own interests and mean to ensure it, and that we shall not yield in our insistence on an Arab-Israeli peace. I urge that, in the re-appraisal of our Middle East policy, we use our full powers of persuasion.

The United States owes too much to the people who have returned to Israel and re-established it, to the people who gave us so many elements of our democracy, even to the motto that is stamped on our Liberty Bell, that we can afford to let modern Israel continue to stand in jeopardy. We must give Israel security and peace.



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