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Letter dated 2 October 1981 from the Permanent Representative of  
Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I wish to refer to various communications addressed to Your Excellency concerning the water conduit to be constructed by Israel between the Mediterranean and Dead Seas, and to convey to you the following information related thereto.

The world-wide energy crisis facing mankind has prompted the experts of many nations to concentrate on the search for alternative solutions and new technologies. Israel's efforts to harness the water of the Mediterranean for generating energy must be seen against this background.

The projected conduit, which will link the Mediterranean and Dead Seas, was originally envisaged as early as the nineteenth century. It is designed to utilize the 400-metre difference in the levels between the Mediterranean and Dead Seas in order to generate hydro-electric power.

Energy generated in this way has the potential of benefiting the entire region, including the Kingdom of Jordan as well as Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District. It is worth noting in this connexion that hydro-electric power as a cheap and efficient energy source is still not available in Jordan (see the Jordan Times of 28 August 1980).

Once the project is concluded, the maximum water-level of the Dead Sea, to be reached probably in the year 2012, will only be equal to that which existed before the water-level of the Dead Sea dropped to its present niveau as a result of Jordanian and Israel irrigation projects involving, respectively, the waters of the Yarmuk River and the Sea of Galilee.

It should be noted that the water level of the Dead Sea has fallen seven metres since 1955, to 400 metres below sea-level, and continues to fall owing to evaporation. Thus the water which will flow into the Dead Sea from the

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Mediterranean will raise the level of the Dead Sea, within twenty years of the completion of the Israel project, to its level of 1955.

It must be stressed that the Israel project is not designed to raise the level of the Dead Sea beyond the crest level of the dikes of both the Israel Dead Sea Works and the Jordanian potash company. Existing and projected dikes and dams will provide full protection to those facilities.

It should further be noted that Israel's largest chemical industrial complex, as well as hotels and tourist development projects, are located on the shores of the Dead Sea at an altitude identical with that of the Jordanian potash plant. Thus, if only for clear reasons of self-interest, Israel has no intention whatsoever of raising the water-level beyond the altitude at which these facilities are located.

The results of the research carried out thus far indicate only negligible effects - if any - on the composition and chemical balance of the Dead Sea resulting from the projected mixing of waters from the two seas.

In the letter dated 9 April 1981 and addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Jordan (A/36/180-S/14432), he erroneously contended that the project in question would bring about flooding in the Jordan Valley and that sites along the Jordan River would be inundated. In fact, the projected conduit will have no effect whatsoever either on the Jordan River or on the Jordan Valley. That assertion by the Permanent Representative of Jordan also flies in the face of the elementary laws of physics, for the Dead Sea, being, as is well-known, the lowest point on earth, can hardly inundate higher locations, including the Jordan Valley.

In the same Jordanian letter it is also alleged that the conduit will traverse "the breadth of the occupied West Bank". This assertion, too, is absolutely at variance with the facts. It is not necessary for present purposes to go into the question of the juridical status of Judea and Samaria (see my letter to you of 22 November 1978 (A/33/386-S/12933)). Suffice it to state here that nowhere will the conduit even touch the area of Judea and Samaria.

Israel is ready to co-operate fully with the Kingdom of Jordan in the projected enterprise for the mutual benefit of all the inhabitants of the region. Israel has repeatedly suggested to Jordan such co-operation aimed at the joint exploitation of the great potential this project holds in store for both countries.

Since this project can also be highly beneficial to Jordan, it is both astonishing and disappointing that instead of welcoming such an endeavour, the Permanent Representative of Jordan has found it necessary to call it a "fiendish plan".

In view of the use by the said Representative of derogatory and pejorative terms concerning the Israel project, it is also somewhat surprising that the

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Government of Jordan should be planning the construction for similar purposes of a canal of its own linking the Red Sea and the Dead Sea.

Nature has endowed the region with remarkable features of geography which can assist in the production of clean and inexpensive energy. Israel expresses the hope that the Palestinian Arab State of Jordan will welcome the opportunity of jointly utilizing the geographical features which are at our common disposal.

With regard to the Gaza District, it has been contended in the letter dated 13 April 1981 and addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Egypt (A/36/187-S/14439) that the conduit would lead to "acquisition of territories, confiscation of properties (and) depopulation of whole areas" inside the Gaza District. This contention is unfounded. All that is involved is the laying of a pipeline approximately five metres in diameter deep underground. This pipeline will neither adversely affect the population of the Gaza District nor the quality of its water supply. On the contrary, the livelihood of the area's population can only be enhanced by this project.

In any event, the political status of the Gaza District will evolve from the negotiations envisaged in the Camp David Framework for Peace in the Middle East. The construction of the pipeline in question clearly has no bearing on these negotiations.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 33, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yehuda Z. BLUM  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Israel  
to the United Nations

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