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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1980-1981

Letter dated 31 October 1980 from the Permanent Representative of
Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to my letters of 16 November 1978 (A/33/376), 20 December 1978 (A/33/543) and 3 July 1980 (A/35/316-S/14045), in which I registered my Government's strong objection to the publication by the United Nations Secretariat of a series of pseudo-scientific "studies" on various issues relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In the first of those letters I expressed regret that the United Nations had been drawn into the pattern, so characteristic of certain régimes, of rewriting history on the basis of transient political interests. With the second of them, I enclosed a detailed schedule illustrating the factual and historical errors and distortions contained in the two-part "study" entitled The Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem, Part I: 1917-1947; 1/ and Part II: 1947-1977 2/ (ST/SG/SER.F/1). With the last of those letters, I attached a memorandum of law prepared by an eminent authority on international law, Professor Julius Stone, currently of the University of New South Wales, Australia. That memorandum addressed itself to the "studies" in the above-mentioned series; it demonstrated that they all rest on flawed foundations and that, as a result, their conclusions are untenable.

In parallel with that series, the "Special Unit on Palestinian Rights", established within the United Nations Secretariat, has over the last year begun to issue a series of popularized pamphlets bound in blue covers. Like the first series of so-called "studies", also produced by that Unit, these blue pamphlets are emblazoned with the emblem of the United Nations and have been prepared "under the guidance of" the body known as the "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People". As anyone who has followed the activities or

1/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.78.I.19.

2/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.78.I.20.

read the publications of that Committee knows, it is nothing but a pliant tool in the hands of the PLO, and its efforts are essentially aimed at supporting the declared objective of that terrorist organization - namely, the dismantlement of the State of Israel, if not in one fell swoop, then in stages.

By producing and disseminating these "studies" and pamphlets, the United Nations is serving the cause of international terror, not the cause of international peace. In the process, the United Nations has once again misused international funds, gravely compromised the integrity of the Secretariat and exposed the Organization to severe and well-warranted criticism.

Most of the blue pamphlets are based on material which was first published in the "studies". Given their sponsorship and their provenance, it is not surprising that they suffer from the same gross defects as the earlier series and are little more than thinly disguised pieces of propaganda on behalf of the PLO.

One of the pamphlets which is not based on previously published material is entitled "Israel's Policy on the West Bank: Water Resources". I attach herewith a critique of that pamphlet, illustrating a number of its conscious omissions and distortions. Similar serious flaws permeate all the other pamphlets in the series.

I have the honour to request that this letter and its attachment be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda items 26 and 91.

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

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ANNEX

Water Resources in Judea and Samaria

A recent publication issued by the "Palestinian Unit" in the United Nations Secretariat, entitled Israel's Policy on the West Bank: Water Resources, presents and encourages a bogus thesis on this subject. It alleges, in essence, that Israel is exploiting the limited water sources of Judea and Samaria "at the expense of Arab farmers" in order "to make a larger amount of water available for Israeli consumption" (p. 10).

As the following data demonstrate, this thesis does not hold water.

1. Subterranean water sources, in the Middle East and elsewhere, do not correspond to political demarcation lines. Since 1967, it has been possible to develop the water system on the basis of geophysical, as opposed to political, considerations, with a view to the proper utilisation and preservation of the available water resources.
2. Water consumption for domestic purposes by the inhabitants of Judea-Samaria has almost tripled since 1967, rising from 5.4 million cubic metres to almost 15 million cubic metres. Dependence on shallow wells, subject to extreme fluctuations caused by changing weather conditions, has been made unnecessary in large parts of Judea-Samaria. Instead, most inhabitants are assured a steady supply of water from modern, Israeli-built water supply systems taking advantage of new drilling technologies to reach previously untapped water sources. There are now almost 50 villages with running water, as opposed to a mere handful in 1967.
3. If, as the pamphlet insists, Israel's water policies "have become a problem for citrus producers and vegetable farmers" (p. 10), that "problem" would have been reflected in statistics which would indicate declining agricultural productivity. In fact, the agricultural yield in Judea-Samaria has increased twelve-fold; and the cultivated area under irrigation has expanded by 160%. These advances have been achieved despite the seemingly contradictory fact that actual water consumption for agricultural purposes has remained constant since 1967. The explanation lies in the more sophisticated methods of cultivation and economic watering systems -- such as drip irrigation -- introduced to Arab villagers in Judea-Samaria by Israeli agronomists.

4. In addition to tripling domestic water consumption and increasing agricultural output twelve-fold, Israeli authorities have made various improvements in the water supply and delivery system in Judea-Samaria.

a. The number of government-sponsored waterworks for Arab inhabitants has increased from two to nine, as indicated in Table 1. The two existing waterworks (at Abbud and at Shibtin) were expanded, and two additional waterworks were handed over to local Arab communities (at Tubas and Nablus).

b. The number of storage pools -- necessary to temper the harsh effects of water-supply fluctuations in a region subject to drought, extreme heat, and the like -- has been doubled, rising from ten to twenty pools. More important, the new pools (listed in Table 2) have increased water storage capacity by 900%.

c. The total length of underground water mains has been extended from 45 kilometres of pipe in 1967 to almost 250 kilometres today.

d. Water quality has improved with the introduction, for the first time, of modern chlorination techniques.

e. According to studies by water planning experts in Israel, over-exploitation of the region's watershed is liable to result in salination -- a process that would cause irreparable damage. Newly installed flow and usage monitors now provide the data necessary for making informed decisions concerning the optimal use of new and existing wells attainable without exposing the region's aquifers to a dangerous influx of saline water. Such data was not collected under the Jordanian administration, although its collection was required by Jordanian law.

f. When and where necessary, it has been possible to effect reciprocal transfers of water between Israel and Judea-Samaria. On balance, these transfers have worked to the benefit of Judea and Samaria at the expense of Israel. Thus, for example,

in the 1979-1980 period, over 2.7 million cubic metres of water were pumped from Israel to Judea-Samaria (mainly to the Ramallah and Hebron regions), while only 0.5 million cubic metres were pumped from Judea-Samaria to Israel (mainly from the Herodian waterworks to Jerusalem). The net balance in favour of Judea-Samaria was almost 2.2 million cubic metres.

These facts demonstrate that the Arab inhabitants of Judea and Samaria are today the beneficiaries of an increased, safer and more assured supply of water than ever.

This, in itself, is enough to refute the allegations in the pamphlet under consideration. However, certain of its more glaring misstatements and innuendos cannot be allowed to pass in silence.

1. The requirement of obtaining a permit before drilling new wells is represented as an Israeli innovation (p. 11). In fact, the regulations concerning the drilling of new wells are Jordanian in origin. The Israeli procedures for granting permits are in accordance with the Jordanian Regulations for Control of Underground Waters, published on 18 August 1966 in the Official Gazette of Jordan, no. 1943.

2. Contrary to the implication on page 12, water metres have been placed on Arab and Jewish wells, not just on Arab wells. This is in accordance with provisions of the Jordanian Law referred to above, and is essential in order to prevent the over-exploitation of water sources also referred to above.

3. Almost half of the pamphlet (pp. 3-9) is devoted to speculations and conjectures of newspaper reporters on Israel's water policy. When scrutinised, they can be seen to be a very tendentious selection of private opinions which in no way reflect Israel's policy. The aim of the water policy in Judea-Samaria, as throughout the whole water system, remains to supply all the water needed in keeping with an increasing population and an improved standard of living.

4. The Awja Case

The charge that Israeli drilling adversely affects pre-existing local water supplies is a complete fabrication.

The only detailed example provided in the pamphlet of these alleged ill-effects concerns the village of Awja (p. 14).

The Awja Springs flow from the ground at an elevation of 30 metres above sea level, at an annual rate of about 10 million cubic metres, a rate which fluctuates radically in direct proportion to the amount of rainfall in the region. In a year of plentiful rain, the Springs' flow can reach as much as 25 million cubic metres whereas, in a year of drought, it can drop as low as 1 million cubic metres or less. In the drought year of 1962/63, for instance, the Springs produced only 1.1 million cubic metres of water.

The wells sunk in the area by the Mekorot Water Company of Israel reach a depth of 190 metres below sea level, over 210 metres below the level of the Awja Springs, and there is no interflow or physical connection whatsoever between the two. Therefore, the charge in the pamphlet that the Mekorot wells affect the flow of the spring waters is entirely unfounded.

There was indeed a drastic reduction in the flow of the Awja Spring waters between July and November 1979. But this resulted from the two-fold natural occurrence of (a) the cumulative effect of sparse rainfall in the three years from 1976 to 1978; and (b) the severe drought of 1978/79, during which annual rainfall levels fell to 70 or 80 percent below average.

The pamphlet neglects to mention that heavy rainfalls in December of 1979 brought about a renewed flow from the Awja Springs. That renewal constitutes further proof that the temporary cessation of Spring waters in 1979 could in no way be attributed to the Mekorot wells in the vicinity.

Table 1
New Wells Provided by
the Israel Administration
since 1967

	<u>Yield</u> <u>(in cubic metres per hour)</u>
Samu	60
Herodion 2	400 (supplying Bethlehem and Hebron areas)
Herodion 1	80
Deir Shaer	100
Shibtin 4	80
Bitunia	300 (supplying Ramallah area)
A-Zawiyah	100
Beth Iba	250 (supplying Nablus and its western suburbs)
Dotan	<u>300</u> (supplying Jenin and vicinity)
Total yield	1,670 cubic metres per hour

Table 2
New Storage Facilities Provided by
the Israel Administration
since 1967

	<u>Capacity (in cubic metres)</u>
Kiryat Arba	1,000
Mamreh	3,750
Bitunia	1,000
Deir Abu Mash'al	500
Bidiya	1,000
Deir Shaer	350
Yata	150
Dotan	1,000
Tubas	1,000
Akaba	<u>100</u>
Total capacity	9,850 cubic metres