

**June 9, 1961**

**Memorandum by Deputy Assistant Secretary of  
State for Near East and South Asian Affairs Armin H.  
Meyer of White House Discussion on  
Ben-Gurion/Kennedy Meeting**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Notes from Meyer on the Ben-Gurion/Kennedy meeting in New York.

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English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

SECRET

~~TO: NEA - Phillips Talbot~~  
~~FROM: NE - Robert C. Strong~~  
~~William L. Hamilton~~  
~~William D. Brewer~~

When Phil and I were at the White House several days ago checking fine points with Mike Feldman re the BG-JFK talk, I found the following side-lights of interest:

1. Plutonium. In discussing AE, BG in his low voice at one point mumbled something that the question of plutonium would not arise until the installation is finished in 1964. At that time, Israel can decide what to do about processing the plutonium. Didn't we hear from Reid that BG had said the plutonium would have to be returned to the country providing the uranium? Seems to be a slight contradiction.

*French said they were to get all (see attached file)*

(1) WRC's Comments: On January 4 BG told Reid that return of the project (plutonium) is generally a condition imposed by suppliers of uranium. He implied that this would probably be the case when Israel's reactor was completed and it sought outside supplies of uranium as fuel. But looking back on it the statement seems to have been overtly evasive.

2. Hawks. Feldman made quite a point of having Phil's memo include a point reportedly made by the President, i.e., that in keeping the possibility of Hawks under review, the USG needs a better understanding of the extent of the danger facing Israel. I gathered an impression that Feldman may be thinking of something rather soon by way of an Israeli report demonstrating that the Arab threat is more serious than we now believe.

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3. Fighters. Ben-Gurion informed the President that the UAR now has 300 fighter planes available, plus 200 additional fighters on call from other Arab nations. These figures should be checked with our figures.

(1) WRC's Comment: Do not correspond with our figures. See attached.)

(2) WDB's Comment: Re AHM's note, attached, UAR (Egypt) has as of this date 145 operational MIG-15's and MIG-17's plus approximately 60 MIG-19's in various stages of assembly and running in. Syrian region has 50 MIG-17's, making total jet fighter strength of UAR about 255 aircraft. Other Arabs have total jet fighter strength of about 140 aircraft. You will note that these figures are somewhat smaller than those alleged by BG.

4. Unaligned Conference. In discussing the unaligned conference, BG quite confidently informed JFK that he, Ben-Gurion, has a European at the Cairo unaligned conference. The implication was that this European is serving pretty much as BG's agent. Could it be Yugoslavia? What other European might it be?

(1) WDB's Comment: Re BG's "man" at the Cairo non-aligned meeting, the only European there is Yugoslavia. The Yugos have in the past maintained some relations with Israel and have not hidden this from the Arabs; so it may be that he was referring to, and probably exaggerating, an Israeli connection with Yugoslavia.

FIGHTER STRENGTH

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<u>UAR</u>			<u>Other Arabs</u>	<u>Total Arab</u>
Jet fighters	<u>196</u>	145 (E)	141	337
Non-jet fighters	0	50 (S)	39*	39
Total	<u>196</u>	<u>195</u>	<u>180</u>	<u>376</u>
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Israel

Jet fighters	162	(60 Mirage on order not included)
Non-jet fighters	<u>30</u>	
Total (present)	<u>192</u>	
plus 60 Mirage	<u>252**</u>	

\* Most ancient MIG and YAK trainers given Yemen.

\*\* Israel is now manufacturing the Fouga jet--basically a trainer but with definite ground support capability. Over the next year it can turn out almost any of these it wishes.