

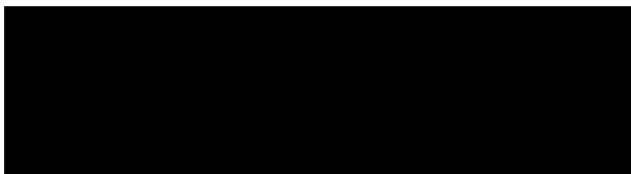
23 February 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Dissemination Control Branch, DD/CR  
FROM : Chief, Publications Staff, ORR  
SUBJECT : Release of CIA/ORR GM 65-1, The Gaza Strip, February 1965, Confidential, to Foreign Governments

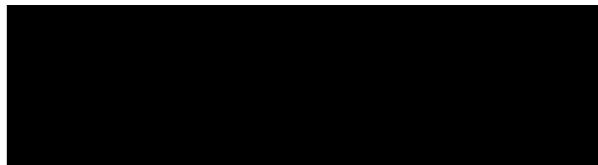
1. It is requested that the attached copies of subject report be forwarded as follows:

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2. All ORR responsibilities as defined in the DDI memorandum of 13 August 1952, "Procedures for Dissemination of Finished Intelligence to Foreign Governments," as applicable to this report, have been fulfilled.



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15 ~~XX~~ Attachments

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AUTH: HR 70-2  
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Copy No. 1

# INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

CIA/RR GM 65-1  
February 1965

## THE GAZA STRIP



DOCUMENT NO. 1  
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Introduction

The Gaza Strip is a dry patch of Mediterranean coastal plain less than 30 miles long and varying in width from 4 to 8 miles. It provides a home for many of the Palestinian Arabs displaced by the conflict between the Arab States and Israel. More than 400,000 Palestinians, almost 290,000 of them registered refugees, are concentrated in the 140 square miles that constitute the Strip. Since 1950, most of these refugees have been supported by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The present UNRWA 2-year mandate expires in June 1965.

Nature of the Strip

In 1948 and 1949 some 200,000 additional Palestinians crowded in among the 70,000 to 80,000 permanent residents of an area between Rafah and the old town of Gaza, a small corner of the Palestine Mandate that was occupied at the time by the Egyptian army. Under terms of the General Armistice Agreement signed by Egypt and Israel at Rhodes on 24 February 1949, Egypt retained administrative control of this area. It has since become known as the Gaza Strip. It is bounded on the north and east by the Armistice Demarcation line described in the General Armistice Agreement and clarified in the modus vivendi to the Egyptian-Israeli General Armistice Agreement executed on 22 February 1950. This 35 miles of the boundary, which separates the Gaza Strip from Israel, was marked by a furrow plowed after the Sinai Campaign of 1956. Guardposts manned by the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) are located within sight of one another along the Egyptian side of the Armistice line. The 8-mile boundary on the south is a portion of the boundary originally demarcated between the Palestine Mandate and Egypt and now separates the Gaza Strip from sovereign territory of the United Arab Republic (UAR).

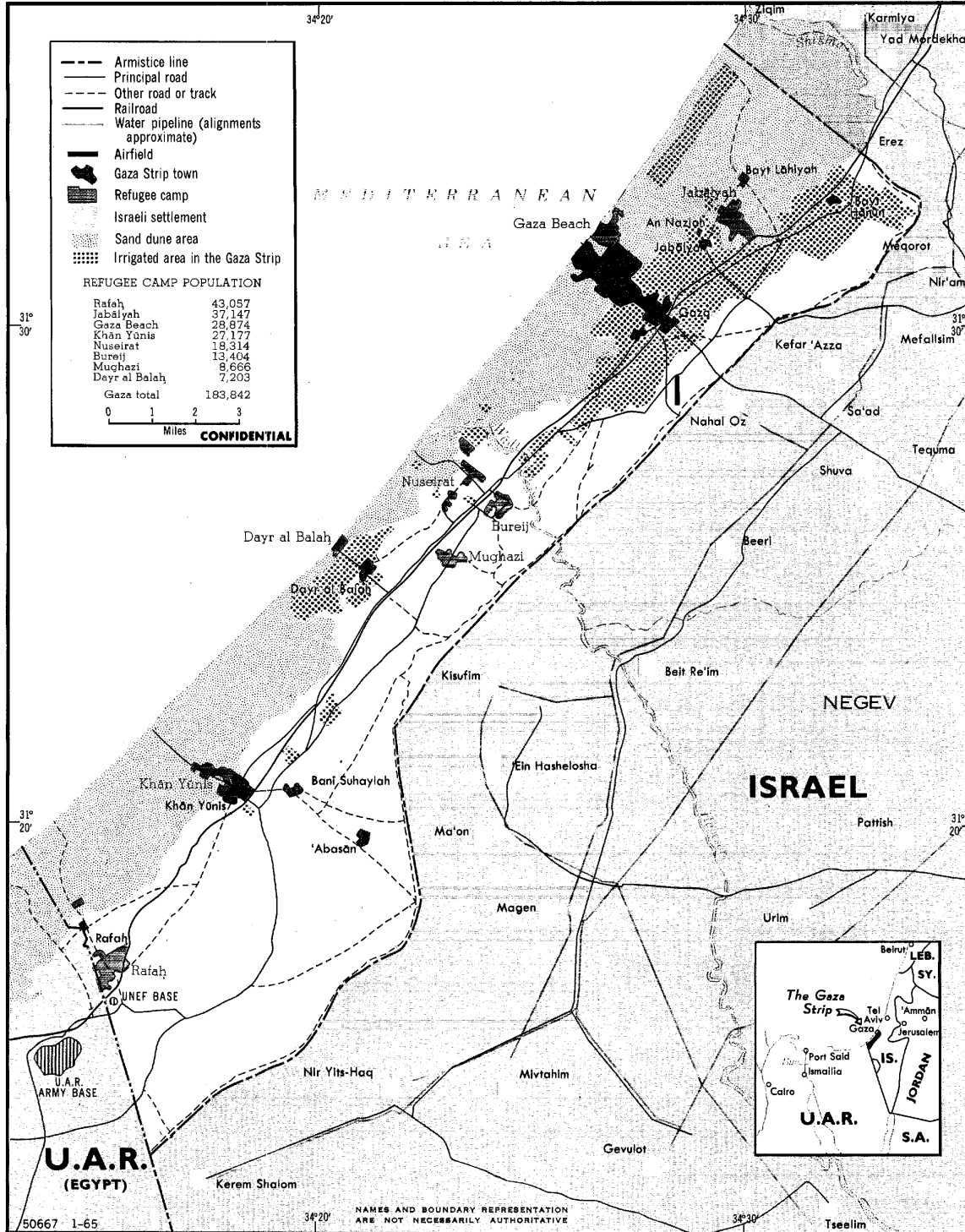
Since 1949, the United Arab Republic has treated the Gaza Strip not as a remnant of Palestine under Egyptian civil administration but, in effect, as militarily occupied territory. The present Egyptian representative on the UNRWA Advisory Commission is the head of the UAR Department of Palestine Affairs in the Foreign Ministry, but unlike the representatives of other host countries, he does not administer the refugee community. A Governor-General for the Gaza Strip is appointed by the President of the United Arab Republic, and to all intents and purposes the Egyptian army remains in control. The present Governor-General is a full general who reports to the Vice-President of the United Arab Republic through military channels. The only unit of the UAR army in the Strip is the Palestinian Brigade, a unit with Egyptian officers and 2,000 to 3,000 Palestinian volunteers, but local security forces are also under the control of the Egyptian Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. These security units include the locally conscripted Palestinian National Guard, the UAR Frontier Corps, and the Police. Technically the residents of the Gaza Strip are Palestinian citizens, but they have no freedom of movement. The few who are permitted to leave the Strip must have a "Palestinian" passport or a laissez-passer, both of which are issued by the United Arab Republic. The flags of both Palestine and the United Arab Republic are flown on government buildings and government schools. In general, the old law of Palestine remains in force, but it is modified as new UAR regulations are added to it from time to time. In March 1962, the United Arab Republic published a Provisional Constitution for the Gaza Strip detailing the "rights" of the people but placing the real authority for affairs of the area in the hands of the Governor-General. The Egyptian pound is the official currency, and the UAR government supports the budgets prepared by the shadow government of Gaza. The United Arab Republic cooperates with UNRWA in the fields of education, health, social welfare, and public health and provides UNRWA with free port facilities in Port Said as well as free rail transport from there to the Gaza Strip.

The Gaza area is situated within the normal market radius of Tel Aviv, which is 40 miles by road or rail north of the town of Gaza, but all legitimate surface contact is with Egypt rather than Israel. Cairo is approximately 240 miles distant by blacktop road or standard-gauge railroad; Port Said and Ismailia are each about 170 miles away by road or railroad. The Strip has no port for cargo transfer and no harbor in which small boats can seek shelter. Ships customarily lie a mile offshore to offload into lighters. A jetty opposite the town of Gaza is used by small boats much of the year, but it is exposed to the surf and is of little use during the stormy weather of November through March.

Travel to and from the Strip is closely controlled, and visitors customarily enter the area as guests of either the United Nations or the United Arab Republic. Personnel of the United Nations often travel in UN aircraft -- the only practical means of coming in from UNRWA headquarters in Beirut. The Gaza airstrip, which is used only by UN aircraft, is situated along the eastern border about a mile and a half southeast of the town of Gaza. The rolled-earth runway, 3,300 feet by 300 feet, is suitable for aircraft up to the C-47 class, but it has no navigational aids or lights. Few residents of the Strip have funds for travel, and fewer still are able to obtain the military passes they must have to leave the Strip.

# THE GAZA STRIP

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Population

In 1946 the Palestine Department of Statistics estimated that there were at that time some 72,000 persons, including 500 Bedouins, living in the area now designated as the Gaza Strip. By the end of 1949 the influx of refugees had swelled the total to about 280,000. At the end of June 1964 there were more than 400,000 people in the area, and almost 290,000, or about 72 percent of the total population, were registered refugees. Most of the people are clustered in relatively few densely populated communities, including refugee camps. About 100,000 live in Khān Yūnis, some 50,000 in the town of Gaza, 7,000 in the village of Rafah, and smaller numbers in other settlements. More than 183,000 persons, 45 percent of the total population, reside in eight refugee camps that are strung out the length of the Strip. Although the population density approaches 2,900 persons per square mile, there are some areas in which few people are settled. This is particularly true of some of the coastal dune areas and parts of the Strip southeast of Khān Yūnis.

The old towns and villages are still without electricity or sewers and retain the compact, dirt-street flavor of an Arab community. New residential construction between the town of Gaza and the beach, however, is laid out in a rectangular pattern planned for a low density of population. The comfortable villas of the established landowners and the apartments of UN employees and local shopkeepers are in this new neighborhood. Clubs, casinos, and restaurants line the beach a stone's throw from the Gaza Beach Camp, which houses 28,000 refugees. Originally, the refugees sought shelter in mosques, barracks, and makeshift lean-tos. Tent camps followed, but they have given way to permanent structures laid out in a characteristic rectangular pattern on dune land or other sites unsuited to agriculture. The older huts are of traditional mud-and-wattle construction, but more recent dwellings have been built with locally produced concrete blocks. Rectangular one-story schools, clinics, offices, and warehouses dot the landscape in the vicinity of the camps. The row on row of small huts in the camps teem with people who are allowed to move about and to mix freely with the general population but are prohibited from leaving the Gaza Strip without permission from Egyptian authorities.

A striking feature of the population is its rapid increase. Of the 240,624 persons who were entitled to basic rations as of June 1964, the ages of 3 percent were under 1 year, 41 percent 1 to 15 years, and 56 percent over 15 years. A projection of population to 1980 based on an estimated natural increase of 2.5 percent per year indicates a total population in 1980 of more than 600,000, of which 430,000 would stem directly from the refugees registered in 1964. At present, only some 80,000 residents can be supported by resources available in the Strip.

United Nations Relief

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East was established in December 1949 by the UN General Assembly to assist persons in the Gaza area, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria who were displaced by the Arab-Israeli conflict. The work of UNRWA began in the field in May 1950. By the end of June 1964 the number of refugees registered with UNRWA in the Gaza Strip had grown to 289,155. Of this number, 240,624 were receiving basic rations and 48,531 some other form of UNRWA service. Registered Gaza refugees comprised 23 percent of the total number of Arab refugees from all countries receiving UNRWA aid.

One of UNRWA's greatest responsibilities is the administration of the eight refugee camps, which vary in size from 7,000 to more than 43,000 persons. The total camp population of more than 183,000, however, includes only 63 percent of the registered refugees. The others have found places to live in towns and villages throughout the Strip. Each camp includes services such as clinics, feeding centers, and schools to service both camp residents and registrants living elsewhere in the Strip.

The UNRWA budget for Gaza for 1963 was more than 7.6 million US dollars. Funds are allocated to three major fields of activity -- 45 percent to relief, 42 percent to education and training, and 13 percent to health. Families whose income is less than 15 Egyptian pounds a month are eligible for basic rations. The expenditure for food for one refugee for one day is less than 4 cents, and the total expenditure per registrant is about 7.5 cents a day. Three voluntary agencies -- CARE, the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, and the Near East Christian Council Committee for Refugee Work -- cooperate with UN personnel in refugee relief activities and, in conjunction with the United Arab Republic, also work with needy persons who are not registered with UNRWA.

Basic rations, which are distributed once every 2 weeks to eligible registrants, include enough flour, pulses, sugar, rice, oils, and fats to provide 1,500 calories per day. An increase in allotments of pulse and flour brings the total calorie content of the ration to 1,600 during the winter months of November through March. Individuals also receive one piece of soap a month, one blanket every 3 years, 3-3/4 pounds of used clothing each year, and 1-3/4 pints of kerosene a month during the

supplies of water. Reservoir sites such as the upstream bed of the Wadi Gaza as well as much of the farmland traditionally used by residents of Gaza lie beyond the territory included in the Gaza Strip. Present expansion of agricultural land is being carried on in a haphazard way without benefit of soil analysis or pumping tests of known aquifers. Where well water is available, the suitable soils, cheap labor, and good market prices have encouraged local entrepreneurs to plant new citrus groves at the rate of 750 acres a year. There appears to be little concern over the threat of overpumping the existing sources of water. Irrigation water is presently being wasted because the relationships of soil and water in growing citrus and other crops are inadequately understood. Whether a current Israeli project of injecting water into aquifers of the coastal plain will have a beneficial effect on the supply of water to wells in Gaza has yet to be determined.

### Prospects

The problems of the Gaza Strip have become intensified during the past 15 years, and there is no likelihood that industry and agriculture can be developed to the point of providing a livelihood for the expanding population. Both the artificial nature of the political status of the Strip and its close association with the continuing struggle between Arabs and Israelis tend to discourage investment in the area. A port project, reportedly to be initiated by the United Arab Republic during 1965, could stimulate an expanded fishing industry. If a source of power is provided, new factories for light manufacturing and new facilities for service industries might be established, but all such innovations would provide no more than a token advance toward achieving the employment goal. Even if some agreement should permit the residents of the Gaza Strip to migrate freely in search of employment, the situation would not be greatly improved, because economic conditions prevailing in Arab countries limit their capability to absorb thousands of unskilled workers.

Expanded agricultural production through intensive use of the land appears to be the most feasible type of economic development, and the chief hope for advance in this field lies in a cheap and dependable source of water for irrigation. Such a source is available to Israeli farmers east of Gaza through pipelines tied to Israel's National Water Carrier, which carries water from Lake Tiberias to the northern Negev. Agriculturists working in the Gaza Strip during the 125-day Israeli occupation in 1956-57 estimated that if the Strip were tied to the irrigation network of Israel and the water used to full advantage, the potentially self-supporting segment of the population could be doubled -- an increase from 80,000 to 160,000 persons. Portions of the Strip are well suited to citrus production, but there is little substance in local boasts that the entire area could be turned into a citrus grove. Most of the gainful employment would be generated through agricultural production and marketing, but the increased income would promote additional jobs in other sectors of the economy. Even full development of the agricultural potential, however, would not meet the needs of the area and would still leave more than 220,000 dependent persons.

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winter. Children, expectant mothers, and other persons in need of extra nourishment are served by milk centers and supplementary feeding centers. Many of these people receive a cup of milk a day or one 700-calorie hot meal a day. Brisk trading of rations in the local markets permits the addition of some fruit, vegetables, fish, or dates to the diet of many persons and raises their average calorie intake to about 2,000 per day.

Education and training facilities are supported primarily from UN funds, which at the end of June 1964 were sufficient for UNRWA and UNESCO to operate 91 elementary (Grades 1 through 6) and preparatory (Grades 7 through 9) schools with enrollments of 38,905 and 13,627, respectively. In contrast to many Arab communities in which relatively few girls attend school, 48 percent of the elementary pupils and 44 percent of the preparatory pupils in the schools of the Strip are girls. Classes are conducted in Arabic, but English is a required subject for the 7,569 students enrolled in secondary (Grades 10 and 11) schools. All secondary schools are operated by the Gaza government, but UNRWA pays a subsidy for 4,500 of the students. During the school year 1963-64, 190 students from the Gaza Strip were attending various universities on UNRWA scholarships. Arab countries with refugee problems of their own, however, are reluctant to accept refugee students from Gaza. A teacher-training center operated by the government in the town of Gaza has an enrollment of 229 (1964-65).

Vocational training centers for a small number of boys are operated by UNRWA in the town of Gaza and in Beit Hānūn, in the northeastern corner of the Strip. The center in Gaza can take 368 students, and for the 1964-65 school year there were 800 applicants for the 150 openings. By special arrangement, outstanding graduates of the 2-year trade course at Gaza can spend an additional year of study in UAR technical schools or training in UAR factories. The training center at Beit Hānūn follows an Egyptian syllabus in training boys in agriculture and marketing. The level of achievement in English, mathematics, and sciences in the general schools, however, is such that the vocational schools are forced to provide general courses that will bring the students up to the required level for training. Short vocational courses in subjects such as carpentry or sewing are given for some of those persons who are unqualified to enroll or for whom no places are available in vocational training centers. Only 25 percent of the boys and girls of the Gaza Strip reach the age of 18 with even a limited secondary education or minimal vocational training, and most of them are not finding useful employment. The uneducated and untrained majority have even less hope of self-support.

The increasing number of persons for whom relief is required places a severe strain on UNRWA's capability to maintain the level of the services it provides. At present, some 20,000 Gaza children are on the ration waiting list, and this figure increases by about a thousand a month. Eligible children are customarily added to the ration roll from a waiting list as ineligible persons are deleted from the roll -- a task that cannot be carried out equitably without the cooperation of the Egyptian Governor-General and the refugees themselves. UNRWA estimates that of the names on relief rolls some 34,500 are included illegally, because they represent persons who are self-supporting, falsely registered, or deceased. Estimates prepared independently by the American Embassy in Beirut place the number of such entries of ineligible persons at 37,500 -- the difference of 3,000 representing the number judged to be self-supporting.

### Economy

Gaza was a relatively prosperous area before the outbreak of Arab-Israeli hostilities in 1948. The town of Gaza was on the traditional caravan route around the eastern Mediterranean and had local importance as a Palestine frontier post, a market center on the railroad, and a small coastal resort. Many of the residents of the area owned citrus groves or worked in them, cultivated wheat and barley, or tended flocks on land outside the present limits of the Gaza Strip. When these people were separated from much of the land they farmed and from traditional markets, the economy of the area sagged markedly. In 1948 and 1949 Gaza was not prepared to receive and support the deluge of refugees that engulfed the area, and today it is unable to provide gainful employment for most of its large and basically unskilled population.

Revenue enters the Gaza Strip through citrus exports, the sale of consumer goods, UNEF spending, remittances from Palestinians outside the Strip, and government expenditures. In 1964 the export of oranges produced about 5 million Egyptian pounds in foreign exchange, and the sale of Japanese consumer goods to visiting Egyptians brought in about 500,000 Egyptian pounds. The UNEF expenditures amount to about 1 million Egyptian pounds a year. In addition, several million pounds sterling (1 pound sterling = US \$2.79) have been sent to the Strip by successful Palestinians in Kuwait, Lebanon, and elsewhere. These remittances are generally channelled through Gaza merchants rather than Egyptian banks. The United Arab Republic contributes about 90 percent of the cost of the local government; for the town of Gaza alone this amounts to about 200,000 Egyptian pounds a year. UNEF spending is chiefly in hard currency, but citrus sales bring in large quantities of soft currency. By regulation 50 percent of



the citrus revenues enters the UAR banking system. Although the official exchange rate is 1 Egyptian pound to US \$2.30 and the commercial rate through Beirut banks is 1 Egyptian pound to US \$1.75, the United Arab Republic ignores the black market rate of 1 Egyptian pound to US \$1.33 that prevails in the Gaza Strip. Little of the money coming into the Strip filters down to the refugees, however, and for them inflation is a major problem. The cost of living has more than doubled in the past 10 years, but the eligibility requirements for relief remain the same.

The largest employer in the area is the Egyptian military government, which has a payroll of some 7,000 persons. About 3,000 of the persons employed by the government are teachers, almost all of whom were selected from among the refugees themselves. Local industry offers relatively few steady jobs, as it is limited to small operations such as fruit packing, soapmaking, soft-drink bottling, and fishing. UNRWA employs about 3,600 persons, all but a dozen of whom are Palestinians. UNEF has a local staff of more than 1,500 and occasionally employs an additional 6,500 for construction work and incidental odd jobs. Some 35,000 to 40,000 jobs are available in agriculture, but most agricultural labor is seasonal and does not pay a living wage.

Agriculture has been a traditional way of life for many of the refugees as well as the original inhabitants of the Strip, and if more water could be made available, the number of persons employed in agriculture would rise significantly. The loess soils of the northern half of the Strip are the most productive. The soils of the southern half are sandier, but they have good moisture-retention qualities. Coastal areas are primarily dune sand, but many hollows contain enough moisture to be cultivated successfully. Although all the soils of the area are subject to severe wind and water erosion, they can be productively cultivated if properly fertilized and irrigated. Virtually all of the Strip, however, is dependent upon a precarious supply of water.

In the northern part of the Strip the water for irrigated crops is supplied from wells. Underground aquifers appear to carry water from origins east and north of the Strip, but the rock structure is such that fresh-water aquifers do not reach the Mediterranean Sea, and therefore salt water from the sea cannot contaminate these sweet-water sources. Despite heavy pumping there has been little deterioration of the quality of the water available in the north. In the south, however, sea water has penetrated into fresh-water aquifers, and most wells are too brackish for irrigating any crop except date palms. No intensive studies of underground water throughout the Strip have been completed, but it is feared that excessive pumping from wells in the north may bring about an intrusion of brackish water from inland areas in the south.

About 50,000 acres, or slightly more than half the surface area of the Strip, is under cultivation in years of normal rainfall. Of this normally cultivated acreage, about 35,000 acres are devoted to dry farming and some 15,000 to irrigation. Citrus fruit is the most important agricultural product, but melons and vegetables are produced in significant quantities and large areas are devoted to field crops. The mild climate of the area permits double cropping of irrigated vegetables. Grapes, figs, apricots, almonds, bananas, olives, sorghum, tobacco, and castor beans are grown in relatively small quantities for local consumption. Few animals are raised because they are dependent upon crop residue or imported feed. No forage is available.

Most of the land normally used for dry farming is in grain crops. The mean annual rainfall in the north is 15 inches and in the south is almost 8 inches, but precipitation fluctuates widely in both the amount received and the time at which it falls. Almost no rainfall is received during the summer, and in some years most of the total rainfall occurs in one or two downpours. When this happens, much of the water is lost as runoff and cropland is damaged considerably. In other years there may be virtually no rainfall or else rains come too late or too early in the season to produce a good yield. In very dry years, such as the 1960-61 season, less than half the acreage customarily used for dry farming is seeded. Unirrigated agriculture is additionally handicapped because the driest months, May through September, are also the warmest. Daytime temperatures at this time of year may approach 100°F, but on the average the daily maximums are 86° or 87°F.

Roughly 13,500 acres of the 15,000 acres of irrigated land are planted to citrus groves, including those recently planted on 3,500 acres of dune land that is irrigated through concrete canals. The citrus crop provides the only significant exportable surplus. Good prices have been received in Eastern Europe for the best oranges, and culls bring in almost as much on Arab markets. Citrus trees do not bear commercial fruit until they are 7 years old, however, and almost half the groves in the Strip have yet to reach bearing age. Because of inefficient methods of spraying, fertilizing, or irrigating, many of the producing trees are not meeting their potential in either quantity or quality of fruit, and about 50 percent of the crop are culls.

Planning by agencies of the United Nations for increased agricultural production in the Strip has apparently been meager because of the bleak outlook for additional