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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
17 May 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Israeli Propaganda and the Arab Threat

1. For years Arab propaganda has routinely carried the threat to "push the Israelis into the sea." Israel in turn has used this threat in its propaganda to elicit support for its cause. The present upsurge of Israeli emphasis on Arab hostility dates from the early months of this year following the revolts in Iraq and Syria and the subsequent moves by these states toward unity with Egypt.

2. The Cairo proclamation of 17 April which announced the new United Arab Republic calls for the "liberation of Palestine," i.e., Israel, as a national duty of the new UAR. It is this statement that is currently being cited by Israeli sources in the New York Times and other media as indicative of an increased Arab threat to Israel's security. In addition, the Israelis are pointing to the continuing flow of Communist-bloc war material into the Arab countries, Egyptian progress in rocketry, Egypt's alleged nuclear potential, and the stream of anti-Israeli statements issuing from the Arab captials.

3. Israel's cry of alarm at moves toward Arab unity is probably genuine. Israel fears that a large, unified Arab state must inevitably come to feel itself strong enough to attack. The danger posed to the Jordanian monarchy by the revolutionary changes in the Arab world is also a cause of major concern to Israel. Israeli officials have stated clearly that they could not countenance the installation of a Nasir-dominated government in Jordan, which would leave Israel surrounded by radical Arab nationalist governments.

4. However, Israeli warnings about the urgency of the Arab threat are unwarranted. The Baathist-

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Nasirist rivalry over control of the Arab union has slowed unification to a crawl. The threat to King Husayn's throne has receded, at least temporarily. No Arab military forces have undertaken action that increases the danger to Israel's security. Almost one-fourth of Egypt's armed forces, by far the largest Arab force, is tied down in Yemen. Plans for unification of the various Arab military commands, a part of the new union design, have been postponed indefinitely.

5.

[redacted] individually and collectively the armed forces of the Arab states are inferior in quality to those of Israel, even though they are superior in numbers and equipment. Egyptian rockets, only a few of which are expected to be deployed by mid-1964, are believed capable of carrying a 500-pound conventional payload. Egypt will be unable to develop a nuclear capability in less than ten years. Over-all Israeli military superiority will probably obtain for the next several years. The several Arab states probably recognize that they could not attack Israel and win. The intra-Arab cooperation essential to a successful attack on Israel is unlikely to be achieved in the foreseeable future.

6. The most likely occasion for an outbreak of hostilities would be a major shift in the political structure in the area, bringing one or more of Israel's neighbors into Nasir's orbit. In particular, if Jordan were to come under pro-Nasir leadership, Israel would be greatly tempted to seize the West Bank area of Jordan.

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