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**Department of State
Washington, DC**

49. Memorandum for the Record/1/

Washington, April 30, 1964.

/1/Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Israel, Tanks, Vol. I. Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Jernegan.

SUBJECT

Standing Group Meeting on Israeli Requests for U.S. Tanks/2/

/2/A draft summary record of the meeting by NSC Executive Secretary Bromley Smith indicates that the meeting was at 5:15 p.m. It presents the conclusions set forth in this memorandum in summary form and adds that the Standing Group agreed on a further effort to persuade Nasser to refrain from a missile program. (Ibid., Files of Robert Komer, Israel Security (Tanks), Nov. 1963-June 1964)

The Group met in the White House Situation Room on April 30. Those present were: Mr. McGeorge Bundy, White House, (in the Chair); Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs W. Averell Harriman; Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance; Deputy Director of CIA Ray Cline; Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Frank Sloan; Gen. Andrew Goodpaster, JCS; Mr. Robert W. Komer, White House; Mr. Bromley Smith, White House; and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State John D. Jernegan. After discussion of the papers presented, it was decided:

1) The United States could not afford the losses in the Arab States which would be caused by its agreement to furnish the requested tanks to Israel; 2) nevertheless, Israel had a valid need for the tanks and failure to meet it in some way would generate unacceptable pressures against the Administration and in particular against the Foreign Aid Bill; 3) therefore, the United States should make a strong affirmative effort to assist Israel in obtaining tanks from other nations, the most promising sources being Great Britain, France, and West Germany; 4) it would be highly desirable to communicate the decision on this matter to the Israelis before the visit to Washington of Prime Minister Eshkol on June 1 and to be able to assure them that there were good prospects for purchases outside the United States; 5) knowledgeable, high level representatives of the Department of Defense should proceed promptly to London, Paris and Bonn to explore the question with top officials of the three governments; 6) since European tanks were likely to cost more and be less immediately available than American

tanks, the United States should be prepared to offer additional economic aid to Israel to compensate for this extra cost and delay; the United States should also seek other means of showing its friendship and support for Israel at the time of Mr. Eshkol's visit--in this connection there was discussion of the possibility of proposing a cooperative project in desalination with nuclear power.

It was agreed that it was important to satisfy the Government of Israel that its needs would be fully met. It was further agreed that the initial investigation regarding tank availability in Europe should be kept very quiet.