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U.S. State Dept. press release concerning
a meeting between J. F. Dulles and
Israeli Foreign Minister, G. Meir.

Following is a text (as received in the United States Mission to the United Nations) of a State Department press release concerning a meeting between Secretary of State Dulles and Foreign Minister Meir on March 18, 1957:

Israeli Foreign Minister Meir discussed with Secretary Dulles today various aspects of the present situation in the Middle East, particularly developments in the Gaza Strip following Israeli withdrawal in accordance with the United Nations resolution.

Mrs. Meir expressed her deep concern at the return of Egypt to Gaza, the reestablishment of its control therein, and the reduction of the responsibilities of the United Nations in the Gaza area. The Foreign Minister of Israel pointed out the gravity with which Israel viewed the situation and emphasized that it was contrary to the assumption^s and expectations expressed by her and others in the United Nations on March 1 and subsequently. She also expressed her anxiety at reports and statements envisaging restrictions against Israeli shipping in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba and the maintenance of belligerency by Egypt.

Secretary Dulles reaffirmed that the United States policy with respect to these matters continued to be as publicly expressed, notably in the speech of Ambassador Lodge in the United Nations General Assembly on March 1, and in the President's letter of March 2 to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion. The Secretary said that the United States was concerned with current developments and was in close touch with Secretary General Hammarskjold and ^{wife} other members of the United Nations. He said that the United States would continue to use its influence in seeking the objectives of peace and tranquility and the avoidance of any situation which would negate the great efforts which had been made by the world community to settle the current dispute in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. The United States, the Secretary said, stood firmly by the hopes and expectations it had expressed with regard to the situation which should prevail in the area with respect to the exercise of the responsibility of the United Nations in Gaza, the free and innocent passage of the Straits of Tiran by the ships of all nations in accordance with international law, and the settlement of the Suez Canal problem in accordance with the six principles adopted by the Security Council and accepted by Egypt.

A common readiness was expressed for continued consultation on these matters.

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