

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 5, 1967  
11:00 P.M.

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*or phone*  
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MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Ben Wattenberg *BW*

It seems to me that perhaps you are not getting the full and personal and political benefit from your firm and resolute handling of the Middle East situation.

President Truman is regarded as a great hero in the Jewish community because of his firm action in 1947. You have done no less and ought to get the credit for it.

The "neutrality" statement today by State hurt in this regard, and I am not not sure that Rusk's later statement was able to fully redeem our position.

Perhaps a stronger formal statement is planned by you -- if so, I would recommend it.

If not, here is one other way that might make a small dent (and maybe not so small):

Harry McPherson had asked me to draft a telegram for your signature to be sent on June 6 (tomorrow) for a luncheon honoring Rabbi Phillip Bernstein on the occasion of his 65th birthday. (The occasion is at the Commodore Hotel. Senator Javits will be there.)

There are three possibilities:

1. Send no telegram. (I do not believe we are committed to do so.)
2. Send a standard sort of a telegram wishing felicitations, etc., to Rabbi Bernstein.
3. Send a telegram acknowledging the Middle East crisis, and acknowledging our strong moral commitment to Israel. Perhaps this language would be

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

-2-

appropriate:

"I am honored to add my warmest good wishes and congratulations to those of the distinguished Americans who are gathered to honor Rabbi Bernstein this afternoon.

"I know of your concern at this time of international crisis. Let me assure you that your government will do everything in its power to see that peace and equity will be established in the Middle East."

(The original correspondence is attached.)

I believe such a statement would be well-greeted.

Send no telegram \_\_\_\_\_

Send standard telegram with no reference to the Middle East \_\_\_\_\_

Send telegram as drafted above \_\_\_\_\_