

Israel, it was not in a position to improve living conditions of the people which were necessary to fight communism from within. He asked in this regard that the United States help Syria with grant military equipment to ease the burden. He promised that Syria would never attack Israel.

Shishakli also made the point that the United States should not deal with Syria through the French. The Secretary informed Shishakli he should have no reason for concern on this point.

The Secretary asked Shishakli whether he thought it wise to move for a total peace settlement in the area at this time. Shishakli replied that this was impossible, that there would have to be a series of steps taken to reduce tension before Arab leaders could contemplate a peace settlement. In response to a query from the Secretary as to the nature of these steps, Shishakli replied that they should be along the lines of the United Nations resolution.

The discussion broke up with the Secretary complimenting Shishakli upon the manner in which he had been able to keep conditions along his border with Israel fairly quiet.

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Memorandum of Conversation, Prepared in the Embassy in Syria

SECRET

DAMASCUS, May 16, 1953.

ST D-4/1

Subject: Syria

Participants: Secretary Dulles, Mr. Stassen, Ambassador Moose, Mr. Byroade, Mr. MacArthur, and other members of the U.S. Embassy and delegation; and General Shishakli, the Foreign Minister, the Syrian Ambassador to Washington

After the usual amenities, General Shishakli said that he would like to review certain important problems affecting Syrian policy. The exposition which he would make would not differ much from what he had in the past told Ambassador (then Minister) Cannon, Ambassador Moose, and Mr. Byroade when the latter visited Damascus last year. He said that he had asked the Foreign Minister and the Syrian Ambassador to Washington to be present so that they could hear the discussion and thus be in a position in their further discussions to act in accordance therewith. General Shishakli said that he was a military man and did not talk like a politician. He would speak frankly. He began by saying that as a result of U.S. elections last November there was great hope in Syria and the Arab world that there would be a new U.S. policy with respect