

No. 119

T80.5/2-1953: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions*¹

RESTRICTED

WASHINGTON, February 19, 1953—6:03 p. m.

At press conference afternoon Feb 18 Secretary referred to regional security org which we hope would include Arab States and Israel. In answer to question he stated Israel would be welcome in set up.² In event further press inquiries concerning matter fol statement will be made in clarification.

"Secretary intended indicate that in development of MEDO, Israel wld not be overlooked. In stating that Israel 'wld be welcome in the setup', Secretary had in mind that any regional defense planning in NE must of necessity include Israel's possible contribution and her strategic position at eastern end of Mediterranean. He would welcome conditions which wld enable Israel to become member, but this does not necessarily mean that Israel would initially become member."

If Mission receives inquiries from Govt on this point or if local press reaction makes initiative desirable, Mission shld explain Secretary's remarks in above sense.

In Arab capitals it may be desirable for Mission also to state that plans for MEDO as currently developed do not contemplate invita-

¹ Sent as telegram 833 to Baghdad, 1667 to Cairo, 485 to Jidda, 788 to Tel Aviv, 651 to Amman, 1564 to Beirut, 479 to Damascus, 1060 to Ankara, 5542 to London, and 4503 to Paris. Drafted by Dasplit and cleared by NEA, NE, S/S, GTI, and S/S-CR.

² A Department of State memorandum recorded the following exchange:

"A correspondent stated that following the break off of diplomatic relations by the Soviet Union with Israel, there had been a number of reports about American relations with the Middle Eastern countries. He informed the Secretary that the Associated Press had reported that the State Department had decided to cold-shoulder Israel in an attempt to bring the Arab States into the Middle East Defense Command. He then asked the Secretary to clarify the situation. Mr. Dulles replied that he could say categorically that there was no policy of cold-shouldering—as the correspondent had put it—Israel.

"Asked whether there was more military aid going to be given to the Arab States, the Secretary said that that was a matter on which he could not say categorically yes or no. He explained that, as the correspondents knew, there had been discussion about the possible creation of a regional security organization which would include, we would hope, the Arab States and Israel. He said that it might connect up with NATO via Turkey and so forth and that that was all in the realm of discussion. He added that he assumed that if it were carried through and implemented it would involve some military assistance. Asked whether Israel would be included in that setup, Mr. Dulles answered that she would be welcomed in the setup." (Memorandum of Press and Radio News Conference, Wednesday, Feb. 18, 1953)