

68284A/1-1952: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Israel (Davis) to the Department of State*¹

SECRET

TEL AVIV, January 18, 1952—4 p. m.

725. Pass Army and Air. Had no opportunity pursue further with Eban discussions reported Embtel 627 Dec 27² since he obliged depart earlier than planned. Have impression however he did not have much success in influencing his govt to modify Arab policy or take less legalistic approach. As to former, believe mil influence too strong at present (see Embtel 712, Jan-16). As to latter, recent action Arabs in *ad hoc* policy comite serve to confirm Israelis in their negative attitude toward making any great effort themselves to improve relations with neighbors.

Believe view expressed by Eban to Jones Dec 5³ that Israel now convinced peace settlement very remote is correct. Govt leaders seem have no hope for improvement situation near future. It appears however their attitude may be due to more than mere discouragement. Local reporter states he proposed sometime ago in FonOff press conference taking more favorable line toward Arab countries but says his suggestion was not well recd. About same time author of newspaper articles advocating better treatment Arab minority groups from mil briefing on security and danger to state represented by Arab residents here, which put end to this endeavor to influence public opinion to improve lot of Arabs.

Army is popular and there is considerable tacit agreement with mil views. Polit opposition criticizes bitterly govt, histadrut and some times police but not citizen army, which represents cross section of public. People here are painfully conscious of vulnerability of state to attack and believe firmly that their only chance of survival is through strength of their own mil. There is number question but what mil thinking has extensive popular support which extends through govt to PriMin himself.

As to recent bombing, service attachés are of opinion that demolition involving use such quantities explosives must have required expert planning as well as execution and probably had at least tacit approval from immed mil superiors. They believe results may have been worse than intended but feel spirit of reprisal is quite gen.

¹ Repeated to London, Paris, Ankara, Amman, Baghdad, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, and Jerusalem.

² *Foreign Relations*, 1951, vol. v, p. 973.

³ See the memorandum of conversation, *ibid.*, p. 953.