

strong appeal for me to urge Dept inform press of our action arguing it would: (a) Help prevent resumption former brutal treatment infiltrators, pointing out Israelis only respect force or fear adverse publicity; (b) help convince Arabs we really are impartial and willing castigate Israelis when they in wrong; (c) breathe life into tripartite declaration May 25, 1950; (d) strengthen hand of moderate civilian element in Israeli Govt vis-à-vis more ruthless military faction now dictating frontier policy; (e) counter growing communist line Jordan that we are invariably soft with Israel.

I am impressed by cogency these and other arguments advanced by Prime Min to support his appeal and while fully cognizant delicacy situation believe that suitable publicity in Wash wld be beneficial to all concerned.

DREW

No. 397

683.84A/2-652: Telegram

*The Minister in Syria (Cannon) to the Department of State*¹

CONFIDENTIAL

DAMASCUS, February 6, 1952—5 p. m.

462. Re Legtel 436, Jan 22.

1. At request Col Taxis, Major Jaddid agreed some time ago permit closing of dam gates on upper Jordan ostensibly allow repair Daughter of Jacob's Bridge abutments damaged by flood waters. Jaddid agreed only on understanding this wld not constitute precedent and TSO wld coordinate with owners Bouteiha farm ensure adequate irrigation water. However, little work has been done on bridge and Israelis have worked intensively on drainage project with full knowledge Jaddid. Heavy rains over weekend have caused overflow around dam minimizing benefits of floodgate closure.

2. Arabs of demilitarized zone at lower end of Lake Huleh seized 3 Israeli fishermen last week and turned them over to Syrians. Subsequently an investigation party including UN observer were fired on by same Arabs when their boat approached eastern shore of Huleh. One Israeli fatally wounded and UN observer escaped injury only by lying in bottom of boat. Jaddid promptly returned 3 captives to Israel and arrested 3 zone Arabs responsible for shooting. He promises stern action and will supply TSO with evidence of punishment meted out.

¹ Repeated to Tel Aviv, London, Paris, the Arab capitals, Jerusalem, Tripoli, Ankara, and Moscow.