

## No. 416

684A.86/3-1152: Telegram

*The Minister in Syria (Cannon) to the Department of State*<sup>1</sup>

SECRET

DAMASCUS, March 11, 1952—1 p. m.

503. Depcirtel 758, Mar 4. Legation shares Dept's reservation re view that recent signs relaxation Arab Israel tension sign of real progress towards peace settlement. We find no recent easing Arab Israel tension in Syria where primary barrier to moderation is unresponsiveness of public opinion toward reasonable arguments, which might impress special interest groups and responsible auths in Syrian Govt and present regime wants settlement of demilitarization zone dispute and is interested in projects which wld strengthen Syria, such as refugee immigration with large money grants, but peace for peace's sake wld find little official support, less tolerance from public whose price for settlement now wld be higher than Israel cld pay. Nor do we forget basis present mil regime is claim that previous civilian administrations were not safeguarding natl interests. This regime has will and ultimate means to face up to Palestine's questions, but such unpopular policy changes require time for which primary hurdles of MSP, MEC and refugee resettlement seem to have priority.

Shld other Arab states individually or through Arab League modify their positions re Israel, Syria might be carried along to some degree. Reported moderate attitude of Egyptian reps at UNGA Paris is most encouraging sign to date, but we wonder to what extent Syrians believed Egyptian Govt cld take constructive initiative at present time.

We think specific unpublicized projects, such as Jordan water survey, shld be encouraged while concept of mutuality of interests between Arabs and west gains ground through MSP and MEC. Thus atmosphere will gradually be created for broader settlement.

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<sup>1</sup> Repeated to London, Paris, Amman, Baghdad, Beirut, Cairo, Jidda, Tel Aviv, Ankara, Moscow, Tripoli, and Jerusalem.