

No. 478

683.84A/9-4a2: Telegram

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

SECRET PRIORITY

TEL AVIV, September 4, 1952—6 p. m.

371. Deptel 214.² FonMin Sharett was gratified receive confidential info that US Govt had taken occasion express to Egypt our interest in achievement peace with Israel. He readily agreed that any ill-advised official statements or even press speculation might have unfortunate effect and should be avoided.

He added he wished to consult us re one aspect of matter which was embarrassing IG domestically and abroad, via statements made successively by Ali Maher and Naguib to effect no approach had been made by Israel following PriMin's statement before Kneset (Embtel 286).³ He understands their reasons no doubt dictated by local and Arab polit considerations, but says statements give rise to local questioning and tendency abroad to believe Israel not sincerely seeking peace with neighbors.

As to first point, he was inclined to agree that key newspaper publishers here could be made to see point that matter of such delicacy could not be negotiated in public press and no good would come from putting govt on spot by asking it to state publicly whether steps taken. As to international aspect of question, he thought no action need to be taken immed and if Arabs should accuse Israel of insincerity, defense of IG position should not take form of taking issue with statements of Egypt's officials. He thought some other means of confirming Israel's genuine willingness to reach settlements with neighbors would have to be found, but in meantime he hoped something would come of approach to Egypt's reported Embtel 304.⁴

Apparently FonMin's intervention with press has had some effect since comment and speculation have lessened. INA despatch with London dateline however was published this a.m. to effect forthcoming Arab League meeting will be used as sounding board Egypt's attitude. If Egypt expresses interest in reaching accord with Israel, this may prompt other Arabs later to follow her lead; but if stand is taken against settlement, other states will no doubt

¹ Repeated to Cairo and London.

² Dated Aug. 28; see footnote 5, Document 475.

³ Not printed, but see footnote 2, Document 471.

⁴ Document 472.