

No. 509

66384A/11-652 Telegram

*The Ambassador in Syria (Moose) to the Department of State*¹

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345. Pass Defense. Deptel 265, Oct 24. During five hour session evening Nov 3, Shishikli furnished further details his views on division demil zone (Legdes 185, Sept 25). His aim is establishment of durable frontier line and elimination demil zone with its concomitant incidents and irritations not settlement of all issues with Israel. He envisions frontier line from Tel al-Qadi in southerly direction to "east branch Jordan" (presumably Banias River), thence via most easterly regular water course to Lake Huleh thence down middle Huleh and Jordan through middle Lake Tiberias. Any reclaimed areas east this line shld become Syrian. Shishikli indicated willingness frontier north Huleh be delimited by three-party commission including neutral whose vote wld be decisive but said he thought geography wld dictate line. Frontier thus formed wld be "closed" to normal intercourse. Population wld be exchanged between central demil zone and southern zone, Arabs emigrating to Syria, Jews to Israel. The two govts wld exercise undisputed control each on its own side of frontier. Subordinate questions such as water rights need be no obstacle. Whether foregoing represents Shishikli's minimum demands or merely his starting point for negot can be determined only by engaging in discussion.

Re initiation bilateral talks on foregoing, Shishikli stated he had communicated some time ago to Gen Riley Syrian desire replace demil zone with definite frontier and move was taken by Syrians in MAC to seek solution (Legtel 649, May 5 and Tel Aviv Embtel 1191, May 13). This Syrian initiative was frustrated at Oct 9 mtg by Israeli insistence on discussion of wider issues. Shishikli is still ready to discuss frontier settlement beginning with MAC mtg. If warranted by MAC contacts "formal mtgs" including reps FonOffs cld be held after an endeavor reach agreement. He suggested I discuss foregoing with Gen Riley or with Col Taxis who more easily available here.

I said it was opinion our Amb Tel Aviv that Israel better disposed than formerly to endeavor such agreement with Arabs, to which he replied all wld be well if Israelis motivated by good will.

Foregoing supplements info Legdes 185 re GOS position division demil zone which not entirely unknown Israeli auths (cf. Jaddid's

¹ Repeated to Tel Aviv, Amman, Ankara, Baghdad, Beirut, Cairo, Jerusalem, Jidda, Rome (for Unger), London, Moscow, and Tripoli.