

public statement on subject would be made. Summary of official release published in morning papers follows.

DAVIS

No. 537

884A.00 TA/12-3152: Telegram

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

SECRET

TEL AVIV, December 31, 1952—6 p. m.

1064. Embtel 881.² Helpful attitude toward Yarmuk project indicated by Israeli Government in August (when Foreign Minister Sharett suggested to Fryer and me that US Point IV and Israel engineers discuss matter so that Israeli Government would be sufficiently informed to avoid actions that might hamper project—Embtel 281)³ has been replaced by one of suspicion and resentment.

In line with apprehension revealed by Foreign Minister, (reftel), chief US division Foreign Ministry again raised Yarmuk question with Embassy officer, stating that "rumor strongly persists that mutually beneficial agreement for the construction of a dam as well as for a power and irrigation scheme has been signed between Syria and Jordan". Israel, he stated, "is not being kept informed" and "fears it will be faced with *fait-accompli*". In reply to Embassy officers reminder that Department had reaffirmed its assurances that it viewed favorably discussions between Israel experts and the engineers concerned, informant took position that meeting of engineers was now of "secondary importance" and that basic principle was involved. He stressed fact that Jordan's complaint last summer to changing salinity of Jordan River was taken up with Israel Government, while Israel not being kept informed of Yarmuk project

¹ Repeated to Amman, Damascus, and Beirut.

² In telegram 881 from Tel Aviv, Nov. 28, Davis reported that Sharett had mentioned to him that morning having seen press reports that Jordan and Syria had signed an agreement on the Yarmuk project. Sharett referred to prior expressions of the Israeli Government's interest in the matter and its desire to be kept informed, and suggested that a project involving Yarmuk water rights should be the subject of international conversation. Davis recommended to the Department early action to bring Israel into discussions. (884A.2614/11-2852)

³ Telegram 281 from Tel Aviv, Aug. 18, reported that Ambassador Davis and Fryer had expressed the hope to Sharett that the Israeli Government would not put obstacles in the way of Jordan's Yarmuk project. Sharett suggested that U.S. Point Four and Israeli engineers discuss the matter at a technical level in order that Israel be sufficiently informed to avoid actions that might hamper the project. A representative of the Foreign Ministry had recently reexpressed the interest of the Israeli Government in having such discussions take place. (884A.00 TA/8-1852)