

No. 573

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

CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY TEL AVIV, February 20, 1953—9 p. m.

1348. Deptel 770,¹ Embtel 1318,² Embassy despatch 761 February 16.³ Prime Minister Ben Gurion invited me to meet with him, Foreign Minister Sharett, Kollek and Bendor yesterday afternoon to discuss US-Israel relations in general and representations made pursuant to Deptel 770 in particular. Although Prime Minister showed some of subjectivity mentioned in section one Embtel 1265 in discussing Embassy's *aide-mémoire* re reprisals, it was obvious he took representations very seriously and is anxious avoid injuring relations with the United States and other Western powers.

Prime Minister commenced discussion with expression of hope US policy of 5 years of support for Israel should be continued and expanded. He stated he would be the first to recognize that without help of American Jewry and US Government, Israel could not survive; and that he realized also that free peoples of world must help themselves and that they should not "create difficulties". Commenting on importance of regional peace to Israel and Western powers, he expressed hope that US could improve situation by lending support of its influence and prestige. He saw no reason, however, to delay preparations for defense until regional peace is achieved, saying he thought it none too early to prepare for an emergency. He said Israel would be in position to mobilize considerable armed force and provide important strategic facilities. He dilated on this subject in some detail saying Israel could train force of some 200,000 to 250,000; and could be important as center of communications, supply, repairs, etc.

He commented on how little progress Israel has made in getting military aid, and made plea for early consideration of his request, stressing willingness to cooperate. He said in event war comes there is no assurance most of countries in Middle East would not attempt to remain neutral, and expressed opinion US would be obliged defend Middle East in any case. He mentioned three possibilities in order of their desirability:

(1) To achieve area peace, presumably through Egypt, bringing whole including Israel into regional defense plans;

¹ Printed as telegram 625 to Amman, Document 567.

² Document 569.

³ Not printed, but see footnote 4, *ibid.*