

## No. 589

683.84A/1-2963: Telegram

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

SECRET

DAMASCUS, March 28, 1953--9 a. m.

619. Embtel 611, March 25. Colonel Taxis states in meeting with Colonel Shishikli March 26 he and Vigier apparently cleared up Shishikli's misunderstanding Israeli position and Shishikli corrected false impression intransigence created by Syrian negotiators at last meeting. Summary preliminary information follows:

1. Syria wishes reach equitable agreement with Israel on frontier questions even if negotiations require number of months. (Shishikli expressed to Vigier his mystification at US action in recalling Colonel Taxis prior conclusion current talks.)

2. Shishikli asserted dispossessed Arab landowners whether or not living in zone should be compensated but not necessarily all through exchange of land. Shishikli proposed compensation be in form of exchange of all available land within zones then in Israel territory outside of zone along Huleh, with due regard for natural boundaries; landowners not receiving land under this formula should be compensated in cash. (Taxis estimates cash compensation would be required for roughly 6,000 donums Arab owned land after above exchanges. This is equivalent to holdings of two Arab families west of Jordan. He and Vigier hope secure Syrian-Israel agreement compensate all small landowners in land and these two large landowners in cash.)

3. Shishikli declared he did not seek "unlimited" irrigation rights but only confirmation of existing rights with right of either side to negotiate for increases of amounts of water needed in future. Neither party should unilaterally increase its use of Jordan waters.

Taxis and Vigier much encouraged by Shishikli's attitude and consider Israeli fears expressed Tel Aviv Embtel 1470, March 18 unfounded. Taxis hopes Embassy Tel Aviv will encourage Israelis continue negotiations in spirit compromise. He assumes Israeli religious holiday may delay next meeting until April 9 or later.

MOOSE

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